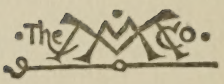
GOD'S WAY WITH MAN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GOD'S WAY WITH MAN

An Exploration of the Method of the Divine Working Suggested by the Facts of History and Science

BY

LILY DOUGALL

Author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*, Etc.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Miss Dougall had a rare faculty for seeing things religious from a point of view quite different from that which strikes the ordinary mind. Critics said that this made her do insufficient justice to accepted views. Perhaps it sometimes did. But for accepted views in religion there is never any lack of doughty advocates, the case for them runs no risk of going by default. Hence, if her essays are read, not as presenting 'the conclusion of the whole matter,' but as glimpses of truth seen by the flashing insight of a free and original mind, Orthodox and Modernist alike will find in them valuable food for reflection.

Miss Dougall thought of man pityingly, of God largely. Conventional Christianity seemed to her to conceive of man on too exalted, of God on too small, a scale. Towards the end of her life the conviction grew on her that one particular aspect of this misconception was prolific in results morally devastating. She saw clearly that the world in which we live is one in which the consequences of wrongdoing are inevitable and calamitous, but that as a rule they fall, in the first instance at any rate, on others than the wrongdoer. If, then, they are thought of as God's punishment of evil, His action has no relation to the principles of justice. Again, while she would have nothing to do with a conception of the Love of God which imagined in Him an easy condonation of the enormities and vileness of mankind, she felt that to use the word 'wrath'—in anything like its ordinary human acceptation—to describe His attitude to the

offender is a degrading anthropomorphism. To express the passionate vehemence of that attitude human language has not as yet provided the right word. Naturally, language has developed to describe human experience, and human anger rarely functions in a way that is likely to make it an adequate mirror of anything in the mind of God. But for us, merely for lack of the right word, to be content to ascribe to God feelings like 'anger' or 'hate' is not only to belittle the moral sublimity of His character, but is to exert, by so doing, a debasing and deadening influence on social and international ethics—an influence potent to block the path of human progress.

The Lord of Thought, written in collaboration with Cyril Emmet and published by the Student Christian Movement in September, 1922, was in the main an attempt to bring out the creative originality of the teaching of Christ on this point. She was intending to follow this up with a book interrogating the universe, as revealed to us from the side of biological evolution and the history of human institutions, in confirmation of this same idea. The book was never finished. But she had published in the *Hibbert Journal* two articles which she had meant to incorporate in it—they are reprinted here, as Essays I and IV, by the kind permission of the editor—and the evening before she died she was engaged in putting the finishing touches to another essay—that entitled *Beyond Justice.* Certain other parts had been sketched out, and with a little patching of these and some other fragments it has been possible to present what is, at any rate, the main substance of the book she had in view.

B. H. S.

LILY DOUGALL

A Biographical Note by Canon Streeter

The village of Cumnor has become famous in the English-speaking world from its association with the names of two women, strangely contrasted both in character and fortune. Amy Robsart is a type of helpless, tragic ineffectiveness; Lily Dougall, though she had her share of the sorrows that fall to the lot of man and was physically most frail, nevertheless, by the quality of her mind and character, and in circumstances more fortunate, lived a life in the highest sense a happy one, and in the widest and highest sphere effective and creative.

She was born in Montreal, of Scotch descent, in 1858, and spent her early youth mainly in Canada, but partly in the United States. At the age of twenty she came to Edinburgh in order to live with an aunt. For the next ten years or so she lived the quiet domestic life of filial duty. But, through the social connections of the Edinburgh home, she had the opportunity of associating with a number of persons of ability and distinction. This had a marked effect on her in the way of stimulating intellectual interests and developing breadth of mind. She also read widely and attended lectures at the University. Towards the end of the period she acquired a sufficient knowledge of Greek to be able to read the New Testament in the original language—an ability which at that time few women possessed.

In 1891, at the age of thirty-three, quite suddenly, from the quiet obscurity of home life, she sprang into fame. In that year she published her first novel, *Beggars All,* which attracted unusual attention. It was a book that everyone talked about, and enjoyed that kind of vogue that causes certain folk to feel 'out of it' if obliged to confess that they have not yet read the book. During the next ten years she produced no less than ten novels—of which *The Zeitgeist, The Madonna of a Day, A Dozen Ways of Love,* and *What Necessity Knows* were perhaps the most successful. Another, *The Mormon Prophet,* is notable as being based on an original examination of the archives of the Mormons and on personal contact with some of their leaders, whose city she visited for the purpose of studying this interesting religious movement.

With the beginning of the new century, her activities took a new direction. In 1900 she published *Pro Christo et Ecclesia.* This, her first book of a definitely religious character, made as great a sensation in the religious world as did her first novel in the sphere of fiction. But this time it did not make her personally famous; for the book was published anonymously—it bore on the title page no author's name. In effect it is an appeal to people inside the churches, who are genuinely religious and believe that they stand for the cause of true religion, to ask themselves the question whether they may not be standing, like the zealous Pharisees of old, for a religion which resembles Pharisaism more closely than the religion of Christ. This was quickly followed up by three other books of considerable power and originality, *Christus Futurus* (now unfortunately out of print), *Absente Reo* (a book especially praised by the reviewers) and *Voluntas Dei.*

In 1911, in order to be near Oxford, she came to live in Cumnor, and at intervals published two other books, *The Practice of Christianity* and *The Christian Doctrine of Health.* Incidentally, so to speak, she and an old friend, Gilbert Sheldon, put out a little volume of light verse entitled *Arcades Ambo.* But the intense activity maintained throughout her eleven years at Cumnor was mainly devoted, not to individual, but to co-operative, work. This was partly manifested in work on committees and in 'fellowship' movements, in London and other parts of the country; it was mainly exhibited, however, in making her house, 'Cutts End,' a centre for conferences and discussion for small groups of persons of very various shades of thought and different ranges of experience, but united in the desire to find some solution for the religious, moral and social problems of the present day. I quote from an article in *The Times* by Canon Barnes—as he then was—a valued friend of Miss Dougall:

"She best deserves to be remembered, however, for the skill and sympathy with which she gathered in her house at Cumnor, near Oxford, groups of men and women interested in religious problems. These gatherings had a quality peculiar to themselves, because of Miss Dougall's personal charm and religious insight. Frail in physique and a little hesitant in speech, she was none the less the unifying centre of her various conferences. They were stimulating and strenuous, because conversation, argument, illustration, and repartee went on unceasingly. The gravest issues were discussed with sincerity and frankness; and the hostess was ever ready to prevent over-seriousness or *ennui* by flashes of sub-acid fun. These Cumnor gatherings were the source of three important books, *Concerning Prayer, Immortality,* and *The Spirit.* Each has already taken rank among the best collections of theological essays of recent years. They are written from the standpoint of liberal orthodoxy and are singularly free from polemical

bitterness. To each scholars of weight contributed; and not infrequently the reader comes upon passages of great religious depth and beauty."

Death has thinned the ranks of Miss Dougall's closest associates in religious writing. A. C. Turner, the founder of the Anglican Fellowship, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, fell in the War; C. W. Emmet, Fellow and Dean of University College, Oxford, died suddenly in July 1923, while in New York where he was delivering a course of sermon-lectures; and in January 1924 died Arthur Clutton Brock, well known as the art critic of *The Times* newspaper, and the most brilliant writer of this 'Cumnor Group.' Miss Dougall herself passed away on October 9, 1923. Her grave in Cumnor churchyard—in the angle formed by the nave and south transept of the Church—looks towards 'Cutts End' and over a wide and open view ringed in by the distant line of the Berkshire Downs.

Along with the books, *Concerning Prayer, Immortality* and *The Spirit,* should be named one published by the Student Movement, much smaller in size but, in Miss Dougall's opinion, not less important—*God and the Struggle for Existence.* These four group-books, together with the book entitled *The Lord of Thought,* which she wrote in conjunction with Cyril Emmet, she regarded as the most important achievement of her life.

As I was myself associated with her throughout, and acted as editor of the group-books, I am able to tell the way in which they originated, the purpose and idea which lay behind them, and the method by which they were produced. My first meeting with Miss Dougall was in November 1914. I had, of course, many years before read *Pro Christo et Ecclesia,* and, like many others, had wondered who might

be the unknown author of this remarkable book. Rumour attributed it first to one, then to another, eminent ecclesiastic or divine who, it was supposed, on account of his distinguished position desired to remain anonymous. It had only quite recently leaked out that the book was written by 'a little old lady who lived at Cumnor'—though the adjective 'old' is inaptly applied to one whose vivacity, humour and keen zest for life made youthfulness seem her most notable characteristic. Canon Newsom had effected an introduction by letter, and I was asked one day to bicycle up from Oxford to lunch at 'Cutts End.'

In the course of that same afternoon we conceived the plan of attempting to thresh out the idea of prayer, and, in particular, the conception of God which Christian prayer implies, by the method of group discussion—the results to be embodied in a group-book. This was the origin of *Concerning Prayer*. And I may perhaps add that, though I acted as editor throughout, the initial idea, not only of this, but of each of the subsequent volumes, was due to Miss Dougall; and the spirit which gave its special character to the group discussions out of which each volume was produced, was what it was by reason of the 'atmosphere' which she created.

The method of producing a group-book as a result of corporate discussion, with mutual criticism of the essays at various stages before they are put in print, was not new. It had been tried in a former generation by the authors of *Lux Mundi,* and more recently in *Foundations*. But the novelty in the Cumnor books was that the groups consisted of people belonging to more than one religious denomination and also included, along with ministers of religion and professional theologians, men who had made their mark in other

spheres of activity, such as Mr Clutton Brock, Mr Edwyn Bevan, Professor Pringle Patterson and Dr Hadfield, representing respectively the fields of Literature, History, Philosophy and the New Psychology. The assumption with which we all set out in these group-books was that there can be no real opposition between true religion and true science or true art. All truth, all beauty, all goodness must ultimately be of God. If there appears to be opposition between science or art and religion, it is because the human beings who are interested in these things partially misconceive or misunderstand their real nature.

The circulation and range of influence of the various books which were the product of these Cumnor discussions far exceeded our wildest expectations. Of the group-books, the last three, as well as *The Lord of Thought,* were printed and published in America as well as in this country. The last time I saw Miss Dougall she showed me a letter from a bank clerk in Australia speaking of the revelation that *The Lord of Thought,* which had been published less than a year, had brought to him in a time of dejection and distress. The day after her death there came a letter from one of the most influential of the younger generation of Chinese Christians, saying that he was about to translate certain of the group-books into his own language.

The summer of 1923 she spent in Canada visiting her brothers, the elder of whom, John Redpath Dougall, is known throughout the Dominion as owner and editor of the *Montreal Witness,* and a lifelong champion of righteousness in public life. While there, and on the return voyage, she was working on a Dramatic Sketch—*The Infidelities of the Orthodox or The Old Faith and the New*—a vivid presentation of the religious situation as viewed with the eyes

of the younger generation. Thus, in what was all but her latest writing, there were brought into play the very divers powers and interests which made her at one time a story-teller, at another an essayist on religious topics. It is hoped that this Dramatic Sketch may be published.

Miss Dougall's work could not have been carried through without the support of Miss M. S. Earp, her close friend for over thirty years. Miss Earp took charge of the practical arrangements of the home and the work involved in organising the numerous conferences held at 'Cutts End'; and also gave Miss Dougall invaluable assistance from the beginning in all her writings, in suggestion and criticism, as well as in the laborious work always involved in preparing manuscript for the press. As Miss Earp is still living at 'Cutts End,' we hope it will continue to be a centre of discussion and, as it were, a workshop for constructive religious thought.

But, in making all allowance for Miss Earp's contribution, the amount of solid hard work which Miss Dougall was able to get through is astonishing. Twenty-four books, not to mention innumerable articles in magazines and papers read to societies, would have been a magnificent output for anyone of exceptional physical vitality. But, to look at her, you would suppose that she was one of those kindly but delicate and fragile creatures who, though they may inspire affection, can contribute little to the world's work. If we ask the reason why Miss Dougall was not one of these, I am quite sure that the reply is this: Religion as she conceived it and as she practised it, was a source, not only of what is ordinarily spoken of as spiritual consolation and enlightenment, but also of invigorating power.

Miss Earp and I hope to publish a Memoir; in this place

I can only indicate the main ideas which Miss Dougall believed to constitute the special message she was called upon to give to her generation.

Above all, the Christian religion was to her a very simple thing, and a very practical thing. She felt that the way in which the great ideas of Christianity are commonly put before the world is much too complicated; and is much too remote from the needs of ordinary men and women, and from practical everyday life. People sometimes said to her that they preferred the simplicity of traditional theology to that modern way of presenting religion which she was feeling after. She would reply: "But the old theology is not simple, it is merely familiar. When people have heard the same words repeated a great many times they come to think them simple and easy, just because they are not new; but they do not understand them. Real simpicity is something that people *can really understand;* and real religion is something which is a source of power and inspiration to the individual in the face of the sorrow and the difficulties of life."

I may perhaps sum up what seemed to her to be the central message of the Gospel of Christ under four main conceptions.

1. God is our Father. But God is better than man; therefore, His treatment of His children will be wiser and kinder than the way in which the best of human parents treats his children. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father." A good parent, if ever he punishes, will do so only in order to bring the wrongdoer to a better mind. Accordingly for many years she had continually protested, not only against the talk about 'the wrath of God' in some

religious circles, but also against the idea that sickness and calamity are an expression of His will. Sickness and calamity, she held, should, no more than sin, be thought of as the expression of the will of God. But towards the end of her life, stimulated by criticism passed on her earlier writing, her thought on these topics underwent development, and she was feeling after the profounder philosophy which, in the pieces put together in this volume, she is striving to express.

2. She always thought of God as being like Christ. To her, as to St Paul, Christ was the 'image' of the unseen Father. It followed that God must be thought of as sharing in the suffering and battling with the evil in the world. I transcribe a passage from *Christus Futurus,* which gives striking expression to this idea:

"Reason cries, 'If God were good, he could not look upon the sin and misery of man and live; his heart would break.'

"The Church points to the Crucifixion and says, 'God's heart did break.'

"Reason cries, 'Born and reared in sin and pain as we are, how can we keep from sin? It is the Creator who is responsible; it is God who deserves to be punished.'

"The Church kneels by the Cross and whispers, 'God takes the responsibility and bears the punishment.'

"Reason cries, 'Who is God? What is God? The name stands for the unknown. It is blasphemy to say we know Him.'

"The Church kisses the feet of the dying Christ and says, 'We must worship the Majesty we see.'"

3. She believed that, just as a child will simply ask its parents for what it needs, so it would be unnatural for God's children not to express to Him in prayer simply and truly what they felt they wanted—knowing that He would give it them if it was really for their good. At the same time,

asking for things seemed to her the least important side of prayer. She once wrote to a friend: "Give yourself a short time every day just to 'enjoy God.'" She meant by this, holding one's self in quiet receptive concentration of mind and heart, so that the All-pervading Presence of the Divine could enter into and fill one's own feeble personality. It was along the lines of this sort of prayer that religion was to her a source of invigorating power.

4. One of the group-books produced at Cumnor was entitled *Immortality*. Three of the five who contributed to that volume have now passed from this world. They know now the truth concerning the things about which we talked and wrote. Miss Dougall's beliefs about the future life were of a piece with her views on the character and nature of God. She thought of the life of the world to come as being a continuation and enrichment—an enrichment passing all understanding—of the highest life that we know on earth. She thought of it as a life infinitely better than the present, but not entirely different—a life of cheerful work, and fellowship with kindred souls—lit up with humour, enjoyment of beauty and the love of God and man. She did not believe in Spiritualism; indeed, she thought that the attempts which so many people make nowadays to communicate through mediums or automatic writing with the spirits of the dead, were fundamentally mistaken. Nevertheless, she believed that the souls of the righteous are never far away from those they had loved on earth, and are still able to assist and inspire them by actual personal contact, but not a contact that shows itself through voices and visions.

It was her custom year by year to print and send her friends, instead of an ordinary Christmas card, a little poem

of her own. It will be appropriate to end by quoting one of these, written shortly after the death of a sister. It delicately reflects her conviction that the life in the Beyond, whatever its opportunities of growing vision and achievement, can lack nothing of the human tenderness and grace of the life we know.

"Grant beauty to our dead,
And human care, and smiles;
Oh, may they, having passed the hour of dread,
Be cheered by homelike wiles!

Lord of the quick, permit
That friends and mirth be theirs,
That in the joy of converse free and wit
They learn new tears and prayers.

Temper the winds of truth
By love in earth-born guise;
Grant that the fairest fancies of their youth
Urge them to fresh emprise!

Christ of the inward grace
Both near and far Thou art,
Death is no portal of Thy hiding-place;
Oh, may our dead fare forth at quicker pace,
Thy sunrise in the heart."

GOD'S WAY WITH MAN

ESSAY I

Providence and Miracle

We know how, when Jove shook his hair and nodded, impossible things happened on earth for the benefit of his favoured suppliants; and in the great prayer in the Apocalypse of Baruch (liv. lv.) Jehovah is thus addressed:

> **"Thou alone, O Lord, knowest of aforetime the deep things of the world,**
>
> . . . . . .
>
> **For whom nothing is too hard,**
> **But thou doest everything easily by a nod."**

This is the first natural human hypothesis about God. It merged early as a childish conception when the sphere of Divine activity was conceived as paltry, and became august when the human grasp of mind was enlarged. When there were many gods, each limited by all the rest, the activities of the tribal god were small because the tribal activities were small; but later the One high God, who could always easily compel all earthly agents to His will, became supremely worthy of reverence.

"The king's heart is in the hand of Jahveh, . . . he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. xxi. 1). "Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord; and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward,

by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz" (2 Kings xx. 11). "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Ps. cxxxv. 6).

The difficulty in accepting this conception of a God who can always do easily exactly what He wills, faces us in every victory of chaos over order, of evil over good. It is the time-honored dilemma:—if the sorry scheme of things on earth is fashioned to God's desire, God is not good; if God is good, He cannot be powerful enough to fashion the world to His will. But the religious mind ceaselessly insists that God must be both all-good and all-powerful, and has devised more than one scheme of the universe with a view to resolve the dilemma.

The solution first offered consisted in explaining all welfare as the reward of virtue, all failure and misery as the punishment of offence against Deity, the Divine goodness consisting in rewarding the good and never sparing the guilty.

When this solution was perceived to be too crude, it came to be held that the miseries of the good were sent for the testing and embellishment of their characters, while the prosperity of the wicked was attributed to the kindness and long-suffering of God, who sought their repentance because, if they did not repent, He must ultimately destroy them. This was a noble conception of God's ways with men, but it was necessary to distort many facts of life in order to fit them into it; and the good, being single-eyed, will ultimately observe facts. Taking the story of Job's sorrows as a type of the misfortune common to nomad life, men naturally ask: If the character of Job was tested and ennobled by his afflictions, what effect had the proceedings of Satan, God's agent, upon the characters of the Sabeans who stole his oxen and asses and slew their herdmen?

What of the triumphant sin of the Chaldeans who stole his camels and slew their drivers? And what of the servants and sons and daughters who were slain? What reason have we to believe that their sudden deaths were either the fit reward of their sins or the consummation of their characters? The drama of Job tells a story the like of which has happened a thousand times in the world's history, and men have long recognised that the afflictions that may instruct one strong soul commonly involve the crimes or misery of others. The writer of that great drama was concerned only with the problem presented by his leading character, and, wiser than many of his interpreters, he does not force the facts of inoffensive suffering into any theory that justifies God as the afflicter. He can only show the inadequacy of the religious conceptions of his day and reiterate in his own way what all saints have said, that God can impart Himself to those who seek even while their heart's question remains unanswered.

But the problem remains:—how can God, while able always to intervene 'easily by a nod,' allow the faithful to call upon Him in vain? More than all else, it is the failure which so often meets the missionary efforts of the best men that refutes the doctrine that the sorrows and disappointments of the good are always blessings in disguise. One large factor in their difficulty is precisely the Christian belief that when man is in distress it is useful to appeal for aid to the mercy of God. For the Christian especially, any satisfying conception of God must be in harmony with the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth concerning prayer. 'Ask and ye shall receive,' is the burden of all that Jesus said on the matter.

There is a story of a good man who travelled into the

then unknown north-west of Canada with an Indian tribe, and there taught them, developing all that was best in their own religion and imparting to them all that they could understand of the Christian faith. He won their love, and they learned the simple arts of a cleaner civilisation. There grew up in the wilderness a garden of which the noblest fruits were the Christian hearts of the Indian braves and the better condition of their wives and children. It all happened, as the missionary thought, as an answer to constant and trusting prayer. But then adversity came. Hostile tribes threatened; food supply failed. He sent messengers for help to the nearest towns, and no help was sent. A little thing—a very little thing—might have turned the scale of fortune as between war and peace, food or famine, help or neglect. But, alas! although constant in prayer, firm in belief that God would in some way save, this good missionary and his disciples were finally beaten down by the enemy, and the women and children were massacred or captured. Where the light of love and Christian truth had shined, darkness closed over. The record of this man's daily prayer and ceaseless faith, with the brief jottings of all that had come upon them, was found buried deep in the earth, and with it a New Testament containing the boundless promises to faithful prayer. Whether this story be fact or fiction, is it not typical of religious tragedy? In the two thousand years since those promises were first proclaimed in Galilee, how many missionaries have thus worked and prayed and trusted, and fallen with the downfall of their life's work! It is only of the successful mission that the world takes count, because it alone can commonly preserve its records.

In the areas round the Mediterranean basin, how many countries that were once Christian have fallen or been driven

back into the more 'beastly ways' of lower religions? Taking the north of Africa alone, the communities which produced an Origen and an Athanasius, a Tertullian, a Cyprian, and an Augustine, must have arrived at no small degree of good living and sound thinking. There must have been many mothers like Monica: what of their prayer and faith? As early as the third century, councils of seventy and eighty African bishops met at Carthage. Can we suppose that these fathers in God failed to pray for the Church in their native lands? What befell? Must we affirm that the harem which has succeeded the domestic hearth of Christian families in those regions is as good in God's sight?

There was a good man recently connected with an English-speaking university who had three promising boys. The parents, as the result of some crisis in their affairs, became truly religious. That their sons should lead high-minded Christian lives was their greatest desire. It cannot, of course, be asserted, in any such case, that the training given by the parents was the wisest, or the environment the best; but the parents gave themselves to prayer for wisdom and for blessing on their sons, in which others, like-minded, joined them. All the sons went to the bad. This is not a usual case—such effort is most frequently rewarded—but my point is that one such case disproves the easy belief that the disappointment of such parents was ordained of God for their good. However excellent the result on their own characters, it could not counterbalance the loss of character in the sons or the harm they did in the world.

Another theory advanced to reconcile God's power and goodness is that the counsels of God are so inscrutable that we cannot possibly know what is good and what is evil in His sight. It is therefore man's highest duty to accept all

things that take place as the will of God without complaint or question. This, the Stoic virtue, is paganism *in excelsis:* it is also the religion of the good Muhammadan: it is not Christianity. True Christians have always at heart rejected this fatalism, although often rendering it lip-service. For it is obvious that man can enter into no real relationship of prayer and faith and missionary endeavour with a God who may or may not approve of any human purpose, who may or may not respond to faithful prayer.

The accumulated results of thought and observation have led multitudes to believe that if they are to preserve their faith in God's goodness and mercy they must give up the belief that He can at all times intervene miraculously in human affairs. Three further answers to our problem have been suggested, which all accept the limitation of Divine power.

One of these assumes two orders in the universe—a natural and a spiritual. The natural order, once started by God, spins on down its grooves of change without influence from on high, while God acts only in the world of spirit, and freely gives, to those who ask Him, 'spiritual' blessings. Two difficulties appear to face this easy answer. In the first place, the failure of missionary effort can hardly be called a spiritual blessing, even when it comes as the only apparent response to long and faithful prayer; for no missionary with the spirit of Christ could suppose the refining of his own soul more important than the elevation of the multitude around him. But, in the second place, it commits us to a dualism entirely unchristian. For Christianity involves a belief in God immanent in man and in nature as well as transcendent. This God is not a God who has wound up the universe like a clock and left it to go by itself.

If God clothes the lily, if He fosters the whole creation groaning and travailing till it comes to triumphant sublimation, if God manifested Himself in human flesh, the order of nature cannot be exclusive of spirit.

Again, it is now frequently maintained that God works miracles in the physical sphere, but will never coerce the free will of men; and all the suffering of life is held to be caused by the sinful choice of men. At first sight this seems a most helpful solution, but it cannot, so to say, be brought to face the music of the spheres. "In the beginning," pain was born before sin. When the morning stars first sang together, the universe had become a system in which sentient choice could not be independent of physical conditions. To say that human free-will is the *only* limitation to God's interference in nature does not solve our dilemma. The doom of some of the highest efforts of man has often been sealed by a bad harvest or other natural catastrophe. Communities struck by famine or plague, by fire or flood, cannot make the same moral choice possible to them under normal conditions; and, however free we may hold ourselves to be, this same relation of physcial cause to spiritual effect is part of all our life. Either the material misfortunes which necessarily paralyse much good endeavour are the direct will of God and manifest His character, or His power of interference in lower nature, as well as in human will, must be limited. If self-limited, the limitation none the less holds good even against what we might call the wish or desire of God. For if God does not desire the spiritual welfare of every community in every time and place, He is not the Christian's God.

The last, and, as it seems to me, the only, answer which is consistent with the Christian revelation, is that God has

chosen to work through nature, never performing His own will in spite of natural sequences, but taking upon Himself the whole burden of the universe that in some way emanates from Himself. Such a universe could not be mechanical, and must be thought of as in all its parts alive and interpenetrated with spirit, but with spirit which is not God nor wholly in harmony with the transcendent Spirit of God. This spirit in nature—untamed but tameable—would be everywhere and in all things open in greater or less degree to the influence of God, manifesting His beauty. In this belief all things that have a material nature have, in their own degree, a spiritual nature; and these two natures are not two things but one thing, just as man—spirit and body—is not two but one. The spirit that is in all things and attains personality in every man, is not God, but is open to the influence of God, and when yielded to that influence becomes the perfect agent of God. So that, although we may speak of God as immanent in man and in all things, and manifest when these are wholesome and good, yet all things are the object of His transcendent love, and He is the object of the love of all things and all men; lover and loved are not one but two. If God so loved the world as to give it part of His own freedom, seeking from it some better thing than could be got by compulsion, if He seeks to win and foster the highest by foregoing the right to interfere or compel, He may still be believed to be the loving all-Father revealed by Jesus Christ. If He is thus conditioned, He may still be believed to be responding by ways of His own to every sentient cry, although at times no outward sign can be given to show that He does not forsake His best beloved when their cause and His lies in the dust.

With such a conception of God and His universe, prayer as taught by Jesus, in all its simplicity of childlike petition, would still be the breath of life; for nature, thus conceived, is no closed system of fixed habits or sequences; it is living and growing. But although we cannot at any time say what is possible or impossible, we are not environed chiefly by uncertainty; but so slow and orderly is develpoment that many things are always certainly possible, *i.e.,* to be calculated on as proceeding from other relations of things. Science is the knowledge of all that is calculable and reliable; it cannot deal with all that element in nature which is beyond.

Here is a linnet perched upon a twig. Science is every day learning more things that are certain about linnets and twigs, but it cannot tell us to which side the bird will flit, to which spray its little feet will next cling. Some men of science may say that if they knew all about linnets and bushes they could certainly forecast all future flittings; but that assertion, resting upon no evidence, is not scientific. It is a theory—as much a matter of inference and interpretation of fact as any religious theory.

Science can only know anything by abstracting certain aspects for examination. By this partial knowledge the world has gone forward to cleaner and easier conditions by leaps and bounds. But science can know nothing of the whole of anything, still less of the whole of all things.

Christian faith constantly affirms that in reality spirit cannot be abstracted from matter, nor matter from spirit; that God, who must be able to know and do all that is possible, is concerned with the growth of the flower, the fall of the bird, and the cry of the child for food, no less than with the search of the soul for the unsearchable riches of His grace.

It has also maintained that out of these riches, out of His own inexhaustible fund of joy, God, when He cannot consistently relieve His children, can amply compensate them for their temporal suffering.

There are few chapters in Church history more moving than the record of the pioneer life of the Pilgrim Fathers upon the harsh New England coast; but out of their sometime failures and misfortunes and sometime successes grew the simple proverb, "God always answers in the letter or for the better." This childlike jingle reflects the whole high Christian faith in petitional prayer, as the vast and splendid pageant of the morning is reflected in a drop of water that falls from the housewife's bucket on the moss of the well.

But to the observant and musing mind such a faith is impossible if it must be harmonised with the belief that God can at all times do anything that He will, 'easily by a nod.'

For this reason it appears to be a misfortune that a group of young Anglican clergy, in many ways progressive, should be heading a revival of faith in miracle as thus defined: "This is indeed the only intelligible definition of miracle, viz., an act of God directly intervening in the natural order."[1] This group assert that God has performed and does perform, at certain times, marvellous acts, otherwise called 'special interventions,' or 'invasions of' or 'irruptions into the natural order.' They do not, indeed, claim that God can do *anything;* the recognition of some limitations has long been part of the orthodox position; but they say that the chief proof of God's activity in the world is "the irruptive action of God, such as orthodox Christianity believes to have taken

[1] Canon Oliver Quick in *The Pilgrim,* Oct., 1920, p. 96.

place at the Incarnation, and to be repeated (or perpetuated) in the Sacramental system."[1]

But as we look about us we see that it is those who have themselves felt the power of God manifested in Christ and in the Sacraments who believe, in the orthodox sense, in the miraculous nature of the Incarnation or the Sacraments; and we suspect the real belief of such people to be based, not on their belief in miracle, but upon their religious experience, which is incommunicable. On the other hand, to those who have not yet had this personal experience—and each generation in its childhood must belong to this majority—this insistence upon the miraculous nature of Christ and of the Sacraments raises the problem of God's non-interference in an acute form. As far as can be gathered, this group do not face the problem of Divine non-intervention; but it is to-day a more urgent question than ever, owing to the fact that the sense of justice and some knowledge of history are more widely diffused than ever before. Explicit or implicit in the world's mind is this question: If God's relation to us is such that at any time He could have miraculously inaugurated a new system of salvation, why were the ancient civilisations, one after the other, allowed to go down into the dust without this help? What of that brave and beautiful attempt to establish an ethical monotheism in ancient Egypt? What of the noble traits in the religion of Hammurabi, superseded by what was more base? In almost every country there is evidence of a period or periods in which a high religious ethic emerged only to be lost. Where was God's 'special intervention'? Or again, since Christ came, what of the millions of men and women who have been left without the miraculous help

[1] Bishop Temple in *The Oxford Magazine*, Nov. 6, 1920.

of the Christian Sacraments? Probably the advocates of miracle would at once reply that God sent the Christ in the earliest stage of human development in which His Gospel could be received. But if God waited upon the processes of development—the long processes of physical and spiritual development—before He manifested Himself in Christ, are we not bound to believe that He chose to condition His power to save men by these very processes of natural development? It is not going much further to believe that He always chooses thus to condition His power, and this is all that is maintained by those who deprecate the insistence upon miracle. The Church has gradually receded from the belief that God's power of action is unlimited. The actions of God, which by St Paul are likened to the potter's arbitrary control over the clay, are in the thought of Augustine and Aquinas represented as subservient to consistent purpose and the limitations of possibility. To maintain that God always works through the order of nature, including human nature (for man cannot be separated from nature), is thus a consistent development of orthodox doctrine.

The contention, however, appears to be that unless God works miracles we should find it difficult to believe that He is active in the world, for without them we could never detect His working, or say how or when or where He worked. Put in simple language, it would seem to be urged that we could never believe God sent us our daily bread through bakers if He did not sometimes send it by a raven. The bulk of Christian experience cries out against this. Most religious people believe that what is good comes from God because they believe in God and not because they have first believed in miracles. But further, it must be pointed out that all that can be seen in a miracle is the

result. God cannot be detected at work. We cannot say how any miracle is performed. If we could see a dead man raised to life, we could not see God doing it, or be sure that some combination of natural processes could not have produced the result. Those who would insist that the result was a miracle would be insisting that nature is a closed system and adequately understood.

That God should be universally invading the universe everywhere, at all times, with the constant pressure of His inspiration, seems to Canon Quick to be almost equivalent to cancelling the Divine action anywhere. In this connection it may well be remembered that in the whole biological system there are no duplicates. Every living thing, vegetable or animal, is a special and particular life. Any personal care that God bestows upon each must therefore, to meet the need, be special and particular. Our Lord, when He said that no sparrow fell to the ground without God, did not apparently mean that God exercised miraculous intervention, but that He did care for each individual sparrow. When God clothes the lilies He clothes each a little differently. It is true that His way of acting in the matter would be somewhat difficult to detect, but a high faith says, and will always say, that everything of beauty is clothed with the beauty of God, while no one thing is like another. In human life this is far more obvious. Every soul has a different experience of God. To say that God is always speaking to all men is not to say that He is saying to each the same thing, or to deny that to each soul his word is different every hour. Faith must believe that God adapts Himself to each; that for each He has a separate revelation of Himself and a separate vocation; and for each, if the revelation is rejected and the vocation neglected, God must

suffer a special and particular grief. It is only in very abstract and scientific thinking, such as is a good deal of the thought of orthodox theology, that a universal activity is conceived as a vast sameness. For example, when our Lord prayed that Peter's faith might not fail, it would appear that He asked for the particular help of God. But the particular help is not necessarily miraculous help. When St Paul thanked God for the way in which the Thessalonians had received his message, is it necessary to suppose that in thanking God for a special gift of grace he imagined that a miracle had been wrought, except in the sense in which all religious life is a miracle?

The moral appeal of this advocacy of miracle is derived from the belief that without it God will come to be regarded rather as a Principle than a Personality. "The obvious danger is lest God come to be conceived simply as a meaning, an explanation, an ideal, and nothing more; lest His existence cease to be thought of as substantive and concrete altogether, and appear merely as adjectival to the world of things, because we cannot realise substantive, concrete existence except in terms of the particular and material." [2] In answer to this we would ask whether the writer of the twenty-third Psalm is describing the miraculous activities of God, or his own sense of God's personal care in every detail of his common life? If he conceived of God in His saving activity as substantive and concrete, who taught him? Was it not God Himself? The constant cry that belief in God's personal care will fade from the earth if some precise doctrine is not accepted, leaves us uninterested because of its radical unfaith in the power of God to reveal Himself

[2] Canon Quick, *op. cit.*, p. 104. Cf. definition of miracle quoted above, p. 36.

to men whenever and wherever they lift up their souls. God is not passive or inert: what He teaches does not return to Him void. If, as we believe, God has revealed Himself in Christ, it is only God Himself stirring in men's hearts who can teach the meaning and force of that revelation; and to insist that we know precisely how He will do this, and to assert that He can only do it in one way, is to have small idea of the resources of the living God. Personally, I believe that whatever is truth concerning God cannot fail from the earth, because I believe that the activity of self-revelation is of His essence.

Finally, the view which I have tried to maintain does not deny any event which the Church has affirmed to be miraculous; it is the miraculous nature of the event it denies—miracle being defined as something independent of natural processes. Whether these events took place in fact or in reverent imagination is a separate question. We are so ignorant of the forces of life that no really liberal theologian would claim to know all that is possible in any aspect of life. That claim is left to those who insist that certain events, if actual, must be miraculous. All that is maintained by the liberal critics whom Canon Quick criticises is that, if Christ came in the likeness of God—if God be indeed, in love and mercy, like Christ—then something other than God's will or desire must prevent Him from effectively saving the world from all that is base and ugly and false, and that something must be the limitation of nature, because all religious experience goes to show that God is working in and through nature, including human nature. That, for some high end, He manifests Himself only in our nature, is the very pith of the doctrine of the Incarnation. That God suffers in all the evil that the process of development

includes is the doctrine of the Cross. The old, pre-Christian faith in a God who at times breaks in and does all that He wills, has grown along with the higher faith, as tares grow up with wheat; but as tares and wheat grow together, the difference gradually becomes plain: the one will support life, the other will not.

But the splendid ambiguity with which Canon Quick uses his word 'intervention' makes it very difficult to grasp. He says: "Every time we act voluntarily and freely at all we intervene in the order of natural events and thereby influence its subsequent course. The doctrine of miracle asserts simply that God has acted in an analogous way." [3] In this sense of the word 'intervention,' everyone who accepts the revelation of God in Christ believes that God with supreme power can do and does all good things that are possible in the sphere of life, and thereby is always influencing its subsequent course. If man, being evil, knows how to give good gifts, how much more God! But how often does man know the agony of impotence to relieve or save! He stretches forth his hand, but in vain. He would give his life for the objects of his love, yet they sink before his eyes in physical or moral degeneration. The whole course of human nature, the life of Jesus Christ—if this reveal God at all—reveal Him as taking upon Himself an analogous impotence, and waiting for the intelligent co-operation of men through whose understanding and zeal He can alone accomplish His will on earth.

The analogy between God's free action and man's must be correct, or God could not have revealed Himself in the Divine Man. Man's free action is strictly conditioned by the scheme of nature, and it is impossible to conceive of

[3] Canon Quick, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

God both as good and doing whatever He will 'easily by a nod.' Man's freedom reveals to us that God may always be acting freely, acting definitely in place and time, and yet be accepting the limitations of the nature in which He works.

We may not believe in miracle, and yet believe in the Incarnation as a particular act of God at a definite time and place—an act made possible by many generations of Jews who had sought God's friendship continually. Just because of the perfect co-operation of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Father, in intelligence and feeling and will, He was the supreme manifestation of the Divine activity on earth.

ESSAY II

God as Educator

We constantly speak of God as 'Creator' or as 'Saviour.' To speak of Him as the 'Educator' of man implies both these other aspects of His activity; for intelligent spirit is progressively created by education. We see this in the growing animal or child; each becomes at maturity what the education of its experience makes it. Intelligent spirit is also 'saved'—in any sense in which we can understand salvation—by education; for education means the formation of ideal, purpose and habit. As long as these are wavering and unsound the soul is lost in the maze of its own futile impulses and lethargies. When these are fixed, true and healthy, the soul goes to its mark, like a well-aimed arrow.

God's activity as the educator of men began long before man existed. Human instincts, even human intelligence, had been gradually brought into existence by the education of countless generations of man's animal ancestors.

A friend of mine, who not long ago went out to lecture in the United States, was taken, in one of the large American towns, to visit a magnificent museum. In this museum the whole process of biological evolution was set out by means of pictures and skeletons and casts of reconstructed animals, so that the student could see all the small multiform changes which had taken place at intervals in the systems of birds and fishes and mammals, from the simpler

to the most complex forms, and also, where the changes had been important, paintings of the environment which had caused the change were supplied. He was told that it had been intended to bring the children of the elementary and secondary schools to this museum at frequent intervals for educative purposes, but that the political influence of the Roman Catholic Church was so strong that it had not been possible to make such visits a part of state education, the priests objecting that it would be subversive to the Catholic faith. When we hear a story like this we are disposed to feel superior, feeling sure that the faith we teach our young people is not founded on ignorance and does not need to be guarded from knowledge. But, unfortunately, there is still amongst us a large refusal to realise that we have no right to think of God, His character and activities, without including in our conception all that is involved in our knowledge of His method of creation.

If it be true, as our Lord said, that not one sparrow falls 'without the Father,' then we are bound to realise that of the teeming multitudes of lives in the countless generations of living things that went to the making of man, not one came into being, rejoiced and suffered and died, 'without the Father.' It is not our place here to ask why God could not have brought man into being ready-made, or by a method much less costly—to Himself as well as us. There are many interesting things that might be said, wisely or unwisely, upon such a question; but our business is only with the facts as we know them, as seen in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Truth is one; we must not separate one part of it from another. The Roman priest who wants to know of God only such truth as comes to us through the revelations of former ages when knowledge of

fact was more limited than to-day, is building upon sand; but so also is the scientist who looks for a revelation only through physical facts, and not through the rich religious experience of the race. This points to the being and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ as the end which justifies and explains a tremendous process which, apart from the spiritual insight He gives us, is seen only on the side of physical fact.

We must always look to the finished work to explain the stages of its process; and looking to man, to the highest examples of humanity, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, we can see that in all the many changes of process, nature has set her seal of approval upon the qualities of *love* and *reason*. Wherever life has taken an upward step it has been by the greater exercise of love and intelligence.

Biologists are discarding a purely mechanical explanation of the evolutionary process. It has only been where the demand of a new environment was met by some increasing adaptability, some fresh response, of living things that more complex development ensued. And again, the greater the development of parental love, the longer the offspring are kept beside the parents, the greater has been the increase of intelligence. What we call 'instinct' originated in a responsive effort, which, becoming habit, gradually came to be embedded in the subconscious mind of the race. It has only been by effort and enterprise, and then by obedience to the instinctive results of these, that the 'life stuff,' or mind out of which we are made, has learned anything. And all the time God has watched and waited for the development of these two qualities—love and reason. They are not antagonistic, as many have supposed. They are not on different planes of existence. The full development of one is

impossible except as combined with the full development of the other. The lack of them means degeneracy. The decrease of either as the other develops means abnormality.

If we take the dawning of love we gain some slight glimpse into the process of education. In the lower ranges of life we see that even normal parents, having taken much pains for the preservation of their young, can still see them destroyed without agitation. A rabbit will destroy her whole litter rather than allow a kindly keeper to inspect them, and a minute after she is eating clover with perfect unconcern. In contrast to this you get more highly-developed quadrupeds who will mourn with feverish intensity for forty-eight hours the loss of their young. But even in the early Stone Ages of man we find sepulchres in which the dead have been laid with implements and vessels of great value, for their use—the archæologists tell us—in another world. Here is love reaching out even beyond death. Thousands of generations of sentient living things went to the upward lift involved in this limited progress; limited, for palæolithic man still seems to have devoured his human enemies. Perhaps at the nearest he lived twenty-five thousand years ago; and ever since then the increase in the power to love, both in the widening of the range of sympathy and the more intense quality of the intimate relations of life, has meant a greater sensitiveness both to joy and suffering, of millions and millions of men and women in whose affliction God was afflicted. In the evolutionary process sentient life learned quite early and easily to be greedy, to be fierce in its sex relations, to hate all things that interfered with appetitive pleasures, to hate implacably all racial enemies. War and cruelty were easily learned; but how slow and costly has been the learning of love! What, then, must be the delight

of God when any one of us can love anything unselfishly! What joy must be His whenever we perform one disinterested act! If He has suffered so much in all the racial education that makes it possible for us to forgive our enemies, to bless them that hate us, to do good to them that despitefully use us, we may be quite certain that we have His whole strength with us whenever we make a step forward in the direction of fellowship and good temper and self-abnegation.

No biologist now admits that a line can be drawn between human reason and animal intelligence in those cases in which animals adapt themselves to new circumstances, acting in ways that transcend the old adaptations that have become instinctive to their race. It is the wit that adapts powers already acquired in one environment to meeting the needs of another that has laboriously built up the higher intellectual functions. An elephant may have a larger brain than a man; primitive man may have as large a brain as a modern genius; but the nerve-processes involved in the labour of thought have been slowly and laboriously brought into use. The shallow superstition which belittles human reason in favour of what is called 'spirituality' refuses to face the facts of anthropological science, of human history and even of the history of religion. Reason is as yet the latest development in the long evolutionary process, and it is only when accompanied by a high intellectual development that human religion becomes humane, and the conception of God noble. If the long evolutionary process does not represent the purpose of God, then God is not our Creator; if it does represent His purpose, human reason must be most precious in His sight. Every exercise that man makes of it must give joy to God; the whole strength of God must be behind

every effort to devote the power of thought to His service.

We must thus learn from the facts of biological evolution that God is educating our souls for companionship with Himself by the development of Love and Reason. It is by the careful exercise of these that we can co-operate with Him and accelerate the process. His joy in us is deepened and increased by our diligent co-operation. In the life and teaching of Christ we learn how thus to co-operate.

In that life we see a rhythm of three beats observed in the exercise of Love and Thought—the in-taking or receiving; the rest; and the outflow or giving. I have not time to go into the detailed proof of this, but I believe it may be studied with profit. I will briefly sketch what I mean.

First, as to Love. How often we see a generous human life spoiled by a refusal to take generosity from others, a neglect of dependence upon God's generosity, or by restless activity. Our Lord's first use of love was to cause dependence upon His Father's gifts, and acceptance of the love of His mother and His community. He was mature before He began the great outflow of His generous activity, and through it all He was eager to receive as well as to give. He called for devotion and sympathy. He accepted the personal service of the prostitute and the costly ointment of another devoted woman. Then, also, He observed periods of receiving strength from God, and—what is very important—He observed periods of rest. Just the same rhythm may be seen in His use of the function of thought. He absorbed all the teaching His Church could give, with its sacred books and Temple discussions. He studied nature, and pondered upon God's relation to its processes. He re-

ceived: He rested: He was not in haste to make up His mind. Yet behind the originality of His teaching what careful thinking lies! what vigour of active thought! To express a new philosophy of life in parable and aphorism is a great feat of intellectual genius.

God's relation to each of us personally is thus seen to be the continuance of His education of the race. He is educating each of us in the rhythmic activity of love and reason. The application of this to the special subject of health in mind and body is not far to seek.

Second, the passions of hate and greed are always inimical to bodily health and mental poise, whereas all the emotions and impulses that arise from a balanced benevolence make for health. Again, intellectual sluggishness or restlessness or one-sided excess, impair bodily health and injure the community. A diligent and wise use of all our mental powers in restful dependence upon God, in learning all that we can from others, and in critical effort to think out our own problems, is necessary to a wholesome life. We should seek to establish regular intervals for reception, rest and activity in our life of thought.

Our attention is at this time being specially directed to one part of our mental life about which new discoveries are being made. God's educative method may well be studied with particular reference to the recent knowledge we have acquired about the subconscious mind. In the transitional period during which the existence and powers of the subconscious mind are being discovered, wild theories concerning it have been advanced. This has always been the case as regards all the forces of nature during our transition from ignorance to knowledge concerning them. Some have tried to teach us that by dipping into the subconscious mind

we can become the masters of material wealth or social position. It is represented as a magic lamp which brings the fulfilment of every desire. Others, more spiritually minded, have represented it as the region of pure spirit, in which, when we retired into it, we were sure of Divine inspiration. By these it is represented as the Holy of Holies.

In reality, the powers of the subconscious mind are merely regulative of all those functions of body and mind which have been acquired by the race so long ago and so thoroughly as to have become unconscious in their operation. The knowledge of the subconscious mind is only what the experience of the race has put into it, and what we each of us personally have put into it. It is nothing more nor less than this. We can learn, in the power of God, intelligently to educate our own share of the subconscious mind, so that it can rightly regulate our bodily and mental functions. *This we can do only by maintaining our personal relation to God in fullest activity, constantly intent on the development of Reason and Love.*

Thus God's education of man cannot be completed unless he prays. But he must pray in the right spirit and the right way. The old hymn says, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." Of prayer, however, there are different sorts, and but one sort is vital to our Christian life. There is the prayer of Stoic philosophy; the prayer of Mystery Religions; and the prayer of Christianity.

The God of the Stoic is all-wise, almighty and inscrutable, immutable also and aloof from our emotions. The only offering He accepts is a life of restrained virtue. "Whatever is, is right"; hence petition is folly. Prayer consists in lifting up the soul in wordless adoration of Supreme Wisdom and in complete resignation to all the ills of life. Such

religion is very noble compared with irreligion; but it appears nobler than it is. It is a sort of blasphemy, for it arraigns God for bringing humanity into the world with a misleading, unsatisfied nature. In Stoic prayer the natural desires and emotions must be kicked into a dark cellar and there locked down.

Such a religion provokes, as a natural reaction, the prayer of the Oriental Mystery Religions, which suppresses the reason and gives rein to the instinctive emotions and desires. Such prayer presupposes a Saviour God, full of pity, offering help in all human distress, concerned less for man's righteousness than for his happiness here and hereafter. This sort of prayer alternates between adoration of the Supreme Tenderness and petition covering every desire. But its condition is the suppression of the intellect. God's saving activities can only be fully drawn upon when the needy soul has learned by practice to make the mind vacant and receive what is desired in ecstatic realisation. This form of prayer is not developed by any exercise of the intellectual powers; but on the whole it may be more honouring to God than the Stoic prayer, because to conceive God as merciful and moved by prayer does not preclude faith in His wisdom; while to think of Him as wise and unmoved does preclude anything we can call love. Still this prayer also is a sort of blasphemy, for it arraigns God as deceiving man by bestowing on him a false light of intellect.

The Stoic prayer comes to us from the pure and high philosophy and ethic of the Greco-Roman world. It is like a spring of cold mineral water falling from rocky heights: the world needs its medicine, but cannot live by it. It is the religion to-day of many 'Christians,' ethical, philosophical and superior people.

The prayer of the Oriental Mystery Religions comes to us from the uneducated masses of the teeming ancient world. It is like a flood rising in hot river valleys, making the food fields fertile, but bearing on its tide malodorous things and germs of disease. It is found to-day in Theosophy and Christian Science and New Thought and any Christian teaching that depreciates the intellectual life.

But let us now turn to Christian prayer, and ask, what was the characteristic that made the Jewish religion so great among world religions? That the Jewish religion was really very great we can see when we consider it both historically and religiously. Historically it contended with all the other religions in the Mediterranean Basin till in Christianity its ethics and literature dominated the whole field. Professor Burkitt, writing of the two centuries before Christ came, speaks of "the great debt that even our modern world owes to the Jews for preserving elements of religion that were absent from the rather vulgar Hellenic ideas of the Seleucid Empire"; and adds that during this period "Judaism came to play an imperial part in the history of civilisation." [1] Again, this Jewish piety formed an environment in which God could manifest Himself in the flesh—in the life of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. That same Jewish piety still gives to the religion of Christ its highest devotional literature, in the Psalms of the Old Testament. Now, what is the conquering force in the Jewish religion? There is much in it that has appropriately perished, but what was its conquering element which our Lord took and blessed and gave, purified and strengthened, to Christendom? It was a way of prayer which combines what is best in both those kinds of prayer we have been

[1] *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 6.

considering; but by exercising the whole nature—reason and emotion and strength of will or desire—in the practice of prayer, the Jews obtained a fuller, better balanced religious life, and a truer idea of God. While the Jew possessed as lofty a monotheism as the noblest Stoic, and a pure ethic; while he conceived God as personal, merciful and helpful as were the Saviour Gods of the Mystery cults, he also conceived God as having formed the intellect and emotions of man for Himself and in His own likeness, so that understanding friendship could exist between the least and most miserable of men and Almighty God. In all the examples of our Lord Christ's converse with His Father we see that He spoke from His conscious understanding as to a Father who could understand His thoughts. In all that He taught about prayer He taught men to speak to God with conscious understanding, making reasonable petitions, telling their griefs and giving thanks. It is thus that men become wholesomely religious, because the whole nature—feeling, intellect and will—is exercised in the highest duty of life.

A writer in *The New Statesman* recently deplored the modern depreciation of reason, saying that such depreciation had always been a symptom of a degenerate age. This is terribly true. The more necessary, then, is it that we should all learn more and more of the craft of true Christian prayer, for the Stoic neglect of simple petition and natural emotion will always provoke into existence magical cults in which reason is suppressed. The prayer of understanding is the vital breath of the soul.

ESSAY III

Forgiveness—Human and Divine

'Forgiveness' is a word more ambiguous than we commonly recognise. There were two boys in a certain school—one whom the headmaster specially liked, and one whom he specially disliked. One day they got into mischief together, and were brought before him for punishment. The master felt resentful and angry toward the boy he disliked; he thought he had led the other into mischief; but he could not, in justice, punish one without punishing both. So, after lecturing them a little, he said: "I will forgive you both this time; do not do it again." But he continued to feel resentful and angry toward the elder boy. Was the remission of the penalty forgiveness? You will say at once, "No; as long as he felt resentful and angry toward the elder boy he did not forgive him." A neighbour of mine, in a large business, discovered that his book-keeper had been defrauding him, taking the firm's money by falsifying the accounts. He was persuaded, for various reasons, not to prosecute the man, and that was called 'forgiveness.' He went about saying, in private, "I have forgiven him, because on the whole it seemed the best thing to do; but he is a thoroughly dishonest fellow and I shall have nothing more to do with him." That is a kind of thing that is constantly called 'Forgiveness' in common talk; and in so far as our notion of morality is legal, in so far as we think of right

action as that which merits reward, and wrong action as that which merits punishment, this use of the word will appeal to us. The Roman nation were a legally-minded people: forgiveness to them meant 'remission of punishment.' They were not concerned about the heart or mind of the wronged person. Their conception of a righteous, or just, *person* was exactly the same as their conception of a righteous or a just *law*. They thought of both persons and morality in legal terms. The Hebrews were also a legally-minded people. The law of God was for them like an emanation of the Divine Spirit: it mediated God to them. But both in the Latin nation and in the Hebrew nation there were poets and prophets who saw that life cannot be reckoned up or explained in terms of a moral law. In the highest form of goodness, in the highest form of righteousness, there is something that is deeper and wider than any conception of legal goodness or legal guilt.

Consider for a moment the case of a mother whose son is a renegade. He has gone to a distant country. She has no means of reaching him even by letter. She hears from time to time of his ill-deeds. She knows that he is taking, bit by bit, the capital that ought to support his family, and wasting it upon immoral pleasures. But, being a mother, she loves him tenderly, and by prayer, by every influence she can indirectly bring to bear upon him, she is seeking to bring him to the right path. He is always upon her mind. She is always devising plans to help him to reform. As far as it is possible, she is always thinking of those palliating circumstances which make his behaviour more excusable. When she is speaking even with the utmost candour of his crimes she never refers to them in the way other people do, but tries to show how and why he is tempted, how and why

it is that he does not resist the temptation. She never thinks of him as bad to the core; but always believes that when he comes to himself, when his true self prevails, he will reform. Bitterly wronged as she has been, and constantly is, by her wicked son, she as constantly and always forgives him. It is a matter of course, because it is a part of her love.

We all recognise this as the true forgiveness. There is no remission of penalty. We can see this clearly because in this case she is not in a position to impose any penalty. She cannot even act towards him with a reserved or reproachful manner. We must see that if this is the true meaning of forgiveness, the remission of penalty is no part of its true meaning. Remission of penalty may, or may not, accompany forgiveness. It is very often the result of forgiveness; and because it is a dramatic, or very obvious result, the unthinking, popular mind, which is the great maker of language, has taken the word 'forgiveness' either to have both meanings or to mean only 'remission of penalty.'

Forgiveness in its true meaning, which I have illustrated by the case of the mother and her renegade son, is something that is very familiar to us all. How many a drunkard's wife; how many a wife whose husband's sins are more distressing and less respectable even than drunkenness; how many a husband of a silly or extravagant or selfish wife; how many a parent of undutiful children, have we known who forgave in this way! But there is a distinction to be made here between people who seem to be thus forgiving. Some wives, some husbands, some parents, some friends, overlook the really immoral tendencies and actions of the people who belong to them, because they themselves have no very clear notion of right and wrong and do not think

it of great importance. Now, clearly, in their case, if it can be said to be forgiveness at all, it is a very superficial kind of forgiveness. We cannot forgive where we are not wronged unless we so identify ourselves with the right that any breach of it in our dear ones hurts us personally. We cannot forgive in these cases, for we have nothing to forgive. This is a point worth dwelling on for a moment. People often excuse themselves for not forgiving because they have been so deeply hurt or wronged. How often has it been said in all good faith of late, "We cannot be expected to forgive the Germans when we remember what they have done." We need to remember it is only the fact that people have done wrong that makes it possible to forgive them.

If you were familiar with a very beautiful vase in a public museum, and your son or daughter or friend carelessly broke it, how you would suffer. If no one else knew who did it, if public opinion was not roused and no penalty inflicted, yet the loss of the beauty would hurt you. It would be hard to forgive, yet if you truly loved the offender you would forgive his careless indifference to the vase.

The point I want to make here is that if you were one of that large mass of common people who did not realise that the vase as a work of art was unique, and did not appreciate its delicate and exquisite beauty, but thought merely of the money value lost, you would have nothing, or very little, to forgive. Your forgiveness might be measured by what it would cost you to buy another vase as like as possible to the first. The depth and value of your forgiveness would be in exact proportion to your appreciation of the beauty of the thing that was broken. We thus see that it is in proportion to the insight one has into the intrinsic

beauty of goodness that one's forgiveness of any breach of it will count—will be of value.

There is another class of instances where people seem to be forgiving and are only superficially so. If a person has not much capacity for love; if he or she does not really care for the improvement of the character of the person who is doing wrong, his forgiveness of that wrong will cost him little and will be superficial.

Let us, then, sum up so far. True forgiveness, as we know it in human experience, has no necessary connection with the remission of punishment, and the depth and power of forgiveness depends on the depth and power of the love of the forgiving soul toward the offender, together with the insight of that soul into the ideal of beauty and goodness and truth which has been violated.

We must be careful to notice that true forgiveness is exactly the same in its nature whether it be exercised in the case of a great wrong or a very little one. While it is true that forgiveness of a great wrong will always be given at great cost, little wrongs can be forgiven very cheerfully, because we must remember that forgiveness is true in proportion to the depth of the love in the person who forgives; and love, hoping all things, believing all things, is confident that the offender will respond and reform. When we say the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us as we forgive," we are bound to ask ourselves, how do we forgive? If the injury be a serious one, many of us do not forgive at all. We have not sufficient depth of love and of the hope that is born of love. But we do forgive, quite constantly and habitually, little failings and stupidities in those we like. We love them and go on trusting them in spite of these. Our pleasure in them and kindness to them does not vary be-

cause of their misdemeanours. The greatest need of human beings is the need of each other, and that is why, when any two people satisfy each other, forgiveness is a matter of course.

Forgiveness is, indeed, a necessary element in every friendship—though it is never the most important element. This is true of friendships between brother and brother, friend and friend, but especially is it true between parent and child. In any case, when the friendship is between superior and inferior, forgiveness will be a constant and natural action of the superior; that is to say, all faults of taste, negligencies, ignorances and ill-tempers, on the part of the inferior or less-disciplined character, will be forgiven with generous forbearance and quickly forgotten, except in so far as the influence of the superior is directed toward their correction.

While, then, it is true, as we have seen, that forgiveness must be inspired by real love for the offender, and is genuine in proportion to the vision of the ideal which the wrong violates, it is also true that love cannot fail to inspire forgiveness: just in so far as we truly love, we forgive naturally and habitually; and further, the vision of the ideal of right is the fruit of a spiritual insight which will be quick to see the good as well as the evil in the offender, his possibilities of amendment as clearly as the ugliness of his fault.

If, then, we are agreed that this is a true account of human forgiveness, does it help us to know anything about the forgiveness of God? What do we know about God? The scientists will, of course, tell us that by the methods by which we attain scientific knowledge we cannot reach the knowledge of God. The philosophers will tell us that we have a choice; we can either believe that human intel-

lect, human aspiration, human heroism, has happened by mere chance in a material universe for which no spiritual source need be assumed, or we can believe that what we find best in human life is the proof that somewhat of the same kind, but greater, inspires the universe. It is as if when we see a river running to the sea, we could equally well believe that the water was in some way a by-product of rocks and earth, as that at its source and all along its track it was fed by water of the same sort that we now see running between its banks. We feel that in this case there is no real alternative: we must infer that the river was fed by the rain. And I personally find it harder to believe that the river of human aspirations and disinterested virtues is a chance product of a different order of things, the product of a material process, than that it derives from a source whose nature and properties it still possesses, and that it is fed all along its course by a continual in-flow of the spiritual power from which it came.

If, then, we accept a belief in God, the inference is reasonable that we—however imperfectly we reflect Him—are of the same nature; for man, as the highest product of the biological system, must be more nearly allied to the mind of its Author than is any inferior product. We have then some reason to believe that what we know of our own nature which is summed up in what we call personality, gives us the best glimpse we can obtain of the nature of God. The other source of our information is the experience and teaching of such of our race as have been endowed with religious genius. Great philosophers, great poets, great prophets, who have turned the strongest mental telescopes that human beings have ever possessed upon the ultimate problems of thought, have given us the mature convictions

at which they arrive upon the nature of God. Those whom we recognise as our great teachers tell us that God is the origin and sustainer of all things; that He loves goodness and hates iniquity. Now, love and hate can only inhere in personality. The words have no meaning for us except as an activity of personality. The love of good, the hatred of iniquity, cannot hang in the air. They cannot be mere vibrations of light or of sound. The words have no meaning for us except as they represent an energy of personality. We have arrived, then, by two ways—the way of inference from our own nature, and the convictions of religious genius—at the belief that personality, righteous personality, must be at least a part, or an attribute, of the Divine nature.

Most of us believe that the greatest religious genius that ever lived in the world was Jesus Christ; let us, then, briefly consider what it was that He taught us about the forgiveness of God, how far we can accept that teaching, and what relation it bears to what we know of human forgiveness.

Jesus teaches us to argue from human love to Divine love. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much *more* shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." That is a very important point. Jesus Christ frankly recognised, what all philosophers know, that the attributes of the human mind or soul are the greatest things we have acquaintance with, that we can only get any idea of the infinite good by gazing at the highest good we know, and saying, *how much more* must this be true of God." That is what Jesus said all the time. If the imperfect parent loves, gives and forgives, *how much more* God! In the parable of the Unjust

Judge, in the parable of the man who asked bread of his neighbour by night, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the argument is always the same—if human love at its worst and at its best is generous, how much more will God be generous!

Unfortunately the best and most essential thing in what Jesus taught about God's forgiveness has been veiled and overlaid by the fact that in the Gospels, as we have them, there are a certain number of passages of a contrary tenor. These passages, I am convinced, do not belong to the original teaching of Jesus.

Of the genuineness of sayings attributed to Christ there are four main tests, no one of which would be decisive if applied alone, but which, when they all point in the same direction, have great weight.

1. *Consistency.*—If we find two passages affirming ideas directly contradicting each other, we have, so far, reason to suspect that one or the other does not express the mind of Christ.

2. *Originality.*—Whatever in the Gospels is found also in the current Jewish literature of the age was, of course, not originated by Jesus. It follows that ideas in the Gospels which differ from the mind of the age are more likely to belong to the mind of Jesus.

3. *Comparative date.*—If we find that a certain idea is either completely absent from the oldest documents, or only very slightly hinted at in these, but that it becomes more and more emphatic with each later version of the Gospel story, we have a right to suspect that the idea was not integral to the original teaching of Jesus, but was read into it by the mind of the early Church.

4. *Style.*—There are many passages in the Gospels which, translated into any language, stand out as gems of literary style. Profound thought is expressed with perfect clearness and in exquisitely poetic imagery. There is not a word too little or a word too much. That is one mark of genius: it is a clear characteristic of the genius of Jesus. Passages that show this literary quality are more likely to belong to the original teaching of Jesus than passages that, in comparison, are wordy and weak.

No one of these tests is by itself conclusive; but when all four, or when two or three of them, are satisfied—or fail to be satisfied—in the case of any given passage or saying, we reach results which may fairly claim to be established on objective critical grounds.

This has been worked out in detail by Mr. Emmet in *The Lord of Thought.*[1] The conclusion reached is that though Christ constantly emphasised the terrible consequences of wrongdoing, He never taught that those consequences were punishments directly inflicted by God.

We must beware of confusing consequence with punishment or reward. A mother lights a fire and her children are warm; that is a case of consequence, not reward. A child falls against the fire and is burned; that is a case of consequence, not punishment. Punishment is a human method of education and government, and its very essence is its relation to individual desert. In nature we see no sign of punishment; we see cause and effect working out over a large field, but it is a working of cause and effect which does not adapt itself to individual desert.

If the laws of Nature are any expression of the purpose

[1] *The Lord of Thought,* by L. Dougall and C. W. Emmet (Student Christian Movement, 1922).

of God, God does not punish. But because punishment is not that purpose, it by no means follows that the Reign of Law is without a moral purpose. On the contrary, we can readily see how God has a special purpose in giving man a home in a moving universe that does not adapt itself to him. Intelligence can only develop in an environment of fixed habits, an environment in which the same effect follows the same cause with regular sequence. Suppose that a little boy should live in a nursery where he could *sometimes* put his hand in the fire without being burned, where he could *sometimes* fall out of the window without damage, where he could *sometimes* beat the baby with the poker to the baby's delight, where, as often as not, he would be rewarded for the worst behaviour and punished for the best. How could he become intelligent? It is by the exercise of foresight that the mind grows strong. In a mad, or—what is the same thing—in a constantly miraculous, world, it would be impossible to foresee the result of anything. But in a world of regular causation man can and does become intelligent. If, then, God's purpose in our creation is to bring forth intelligent or rational minds that can approach Him as children a father, we can see why they must live in a system or ordered causation such as is our natural environment.

This moral purpose becomes easier to grasp if we accept the specifically Christian idea that God, having set His creatures in this hard and dangerous school of nature, goes through the school with them. The sparrows fall—yes, in thousands, and often by man's cruely—but not one that is not attended and cared for in its death by the holy power of God. God does not intervene to hinder calamity to the sparrow, but He does something. What does He do? We

do not know; but Jesus, with the insight of religious genius, tells us that God does something adequate to the sparrow's need. Jesus showed forth God to men. He wept with men. He suffered injustice with men. He dies in lingering agony with men. In affirming that in all this He was exhibiting the character of God, Christianity affirms that God, going through the hard school with us, must have some great end to justify so expensive an education. The love that induces Him to be afflicted in all our afflictions must cause Him to do something adequate to our every need. His activity in nature is limited by the method of creation which He has chosen. His activity in our minds is limited by our unreadiness to learn His will and do it. I do not believe that if we perfectly co-operated with God He would save us from every misfortune: He did not intervene to save Jesus Christ: but I do believe that He would so adjust us to our environment that we should suffer no calamity that would not be transformed into a far greater good.

ESSAY IV

The Worship of Wrath

Written August 1923

There is a scoffer in our midst. He has said that the present action of France toward Germany is in full accordance with the Christian conception of the Divine treatment of the unrepentant, and therefore, as moral ideals have their root in religion, it is futile for Christian preachers to take part in propaganda to end war. Our militarists, who sympathise with France even though they may question the efficacy of her method in the Ruhr, will no doubt agree that to 'rule' the unrepentant 'with a rod of iron' and 'break them in pieces like a potter's vessel' is a Christian ideal —indeed, do not all Anglican Christians chant together that conception of goodness every Easter Sunday? On the other hand the more thoughtful class of British Christians, who regard the French treatment of a fallen foe as a national sin, are roused to incredulous anger by the scoffer's taunt. It may be worth while, however, to consider what percentage of truth lies in it.

For the purpose of discussion, we may assume that the French demand from Germany a servile acknowledgment of guilty inferiority, full restitution, and pledges of complete amenableness. Failing to obtain all this, their intention is punitive. In likening the orthodox belief in God's wrath to this procedure, let us remember that the two cases

are alike concerned with unrepentant, not repentant, sinners. The French action is based on the, probably correct, belief that Germany is unrepentant.

Our scoffer would admit, no doubt, that the humanitarian element in Hebrew and Christian religion all down the centuries has slowly, though not steadily, gained in emphasis, and the strain of barbaric hostility to obstinate sinners has been losing in emphasis until, in their highest moments, men of most orthodox mood have relegated it to a subordinate place. Wrath, say they, in the activity of God is subordinate to love, and punishment is the servant of love. The desire of hearts rendered both righteous and kindly by centuries of humanitarian development is to minimise the doctrine of God's retributive wrath in two ways: by the generous hope that the unrepentant may ultimately prove to be very few, and by the enlargement of Limbo (as in recent Roman Catholic theology) on the ground of the limitation of human responsibility—invincible ignorance being made to cover a multitude of obstinacies. But the principle remains the same. God is believed of set purpose to hurt the unrepentant sinner, not for his good, but when that is past praying for. Mr. Edwyn Bevan, in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1923, strenuously upholds this view; he says: "Just as in human anger there is a desire to bring together wrongdoing and suffering, so in God's anger there must be the will that the connection should exist" (p. 306).

In the *Church Quarterly* of April 1923 there is a kindlier reiteration, by Dr Goudge, of the same principle. "All will sympathise with the desire to deny that God is in any sense the author of any pain that does not purify; all, if only *conscience* and *the facts* would allow it, would like to deny that, strictly speaking, there is such a thing as retribution.

But they will not allow it. The two ideas of retribution and chastisement, though distinct in thought, are inseparable in practice" (pp. 155-156). The italics are mine.

Thus, in the most recent expressions of Christian orthodoxy and morality, we see wrath against unrepentant sinners and the act of hurting them exalted as the attribute and action of God, and therefore to be praised. A Divine ideal is always one on which human character and conduct are to be consciously, and more largely unconsciously, formed.

So far, then, our scoffer has some justification. The amount of retributive suffering due to any unworthy and unrepented conduct, and the question of the right agent and right method of its infliction, are matters for human decision: the ideal remains unchallenged. The emotion of anger is sanctified; and we all know what sort of justice we may expect from the angry.

All moral treatises, all legislation, have been largely concerned in regulating the human application of this retributive ideal which is called 'justice.' Our scoffer at Christianity does not deny that; what he says is that as long as the best men teach that the punishment of bad conduct is God's way of dealing with bad conduct, men will hold that it is the ideally good way, and as the chastiser and the unrepentant sufferer never agree as to the quality of the conduct in question or the degree of retribution that can rightfully be demanded, there will be, between men and nations, constant war. The strong will always punish the weak, and the weak—or if they are slain, their sympathisers—will bide their time, nourish their own sense of rightful retribution, and hit back as soon as convenient. It is of the very nature of unrepentance to resent any punishment and to retaliate.

If, then, the infliction of punishment on the unrepentant is a high and holy ideal, to be worshipped in God and imitated by men, are we not condemned to warfare as long as earth shall last?

Our religious moralists tell us that it is certain that all religion and morality depend on the belief that God's punitive wrath is visited on sinners, and therefore, they argue, there must be some way of so educating the human conscience that men and nations will arrive at so unanimous a notion of what is and is not bad in conduct, what is and is not just retribution, that only the wilfully blind criminal—be it man or nation—will refuse to recognise the justice of such punishment as may be meted out by men or God. ('Wilfully blind'—that is a pet phrase of moral and religious writers.) But let us note that this hope is based wholly on the belief that punitive wrath toward the unrepentant is actually an element in ideal good or God. To the impartial observer there is no adequate evidence that 'righteous anger' will ever stimulate conduct that all but the wilfully blind must admire. The belief that 'righteous anger' is an element in the Divine character would appear to rest on the assumption that it is a purely good emotion, and not, as modern analysis suggests, compounded of two emotions—a beautiful and true antipathy to wrongdoing, and a primitive and misdirected enthusiasm for punishment as its antidote. If this be so, the hope that the world will one day be emparadised by an ideal exercise of punitive wrath vanishes and leaves not a wrack behind.

The scoffer who blames the ideal of justice as preached by Christians for the behaviour of France toward Germany, sneers at the traditional method of our religious reasoning. Is there not justification for this sneer? Do we not adhere

to the agelong habit of attributing to God our clumsy best in ideal and practice without any suspicion that our best is a compound of good and evil?

Consider the primitive animistic tribe, with its custom or standard of behaviour or morals. The sacredness of this standard is necessary to the very existence of the tribe. It binds it together so that all the arts of war and peace may go on within it smoothly and without interruption. To violate customary behaviour, to break the taboo with impunity, is a deadly sin. It is a development of the practice of the herd—its instinctive method of self-defense. The stag chased by the hunters, and escaping, creeps back at evening under green covert and, drawing deep sighs of exhaustion, seeks protection from its fellows; yet it is immediately done to death by their horns. The well-being of the herd depends on common movement. The culprit has separated itself or been separated: is it guilty? They do not ask! So in the animistic human tribe the breaker of custom is slain or sent forth into the pathless wilderness without means of life. Is he guilty? His motive may be self-indulgence, or it may be some intuitive perception that the taboo is absurb or detrimental to the tribe; but criminal and reformer suffer alike. The conscience of the whole tribe is uneasy till each is punished. The human herd has greater powers of understanding than the brute, and it might perhaps inquire into the distinction between reformer and criminal were it not that it identifies its taboo and punitive action with the object of its worship. The very question becomes an irreligious act. The herd does not attribute its justice to the will of God: the tribe does.

The story of looting Achan illustrates the same thing in a later polytheistic and national stage. It was necessary if

the allied tribes were to make a combined conquest that individual warriors should not be led aside from pursuit of the common end by the hope of individual gain. With instinctive wisdom the nation was called together to vow that the spoil should be offered, in holy destruction, to Jehovah. Yet Jericho was full of beautiful objects. The art of Canaan was highly developed. Achan stole a beautiful garment and money and a wedge of gold. Alas! he was led away to a neighbouring valley—he and his sons and his daughters, his oxen and his asses, his sheep and goods. How drear the procession! All Israel stoned them with stones. We can see them huddled together in despair till they were bruised and crushed to death. Then they were denied burial: they were burned with fire. There is much to be said for the punishment. It was necessary to deter other warriors from private loot; and Westermarck has shown us—what the common sense of primitive man discovered—that for merely deterrent purposes the sacrifice of the criminal's family along with him can be justified in the interests of the community. It would certainly secure a strong domestic influence on the side of law-keeping! This sort of justice was probably the best that the leaders of Israel could devise; but to attribute it to God—that appears to us to-day a mistake. Let us mark that in the case of Achan the popular conscience, the sense of right and justice in the common man, was in entire accord with the punishment—"All Israel stoned them with stones."

We have it on high authority that the same nation, in later development, stoned its reforming prophets. This was a natural consequence of attributing their customs to God; no established custom might be criticised. It was not peculiar to the Hebrews. No doubt they began the murderous

process—as did the Athenians in the case of Socrates—by jeering. The first stones thrown at reformers are always jeers taken from the brook of the plain man's sense of propriety. There is much to be said for the condemnation of the unrepentant Socrates in the name of the gods—for did he not seek to unsettle the common mind? It was, perhaps, the best of which the majority of judges in that epoch were capable. The good, honest, God-fearing fellow in the streets regarded the philosopher as a victim of divine wrath. But the real God—what of Him?

Consider, again, the story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife. Whether fact or fable, their destruction certainly shows an ideal of Divine justice common in the early times of Christendom. It was very hard on these two. How many of us have declared to God and men and to ourselves that we have given all we could to the Church when, after all, we had something more to give? The blinding of Elymas the Sorcerer—that also was severe and held to be a work of God. We have, in fact, been busy with this work of piously hurting our fellows for the good of themselves or of the community for some four thousand years. Of course we plume ourselves on possessing more insight now into God's heart of grace, especially of late years, for it is scarce a century and a half since, in accordance with the common conscience, we hanged a mother of hungry children for stealing a loaf. But while we recognise that our forefathers, though doing their best at government, were wrong in attributing their punitive moral ideals to God, we have not ceased to attribute our own punitive moral ideals to God. We are still told that the justification of Divine punishments is to be found in the popular conscience—the conscience first formed by doctrine and then appealed to by

the doctrinaires! We are still told that because we have found no better way of government than by threats and penalties, God must be as resourceless. So much for our reasoning.

The scoffer also finds colour for his taunt in our defective theological science—for I take it that to observe facts, to form a hypothesis, and again to test this hypothesis by observation, is science of a sort. But how partial our observation has been is shown by the astounding fact that Christian theologians assert that life shows sin to be followed by punishment. The tradition comes down, as Professor Kennett has pointed out, from the time when the Hebrews, like the modern Hindoos, believed that if a man suffered he must have sinned. We do not prove now the relation of sin to suffering by assuming the cause when we see what we believe to be an effect; but we have not had the wit to perceive that without the assumption there is no evidence. Yet the sociologist knows that if men rise in the scale of love of the beautiful, the true, and the good, their capacity both for joy and suffering increases. If they descend by increasing worship of herd or self, and are moved only by herd interest or self-interest, they become insensible, first, to any pain but their own—a great relief that—and, on the whole, dulled to those issues of life which involve any keen sense of the distinction between joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure. Our actual experience of life shows that a selfish person, be he sensualist or rogue, inflicts far greater pain upon his family and the community than he is capable of suffering. So clear is this to some of our theologians, so obvious is it that the wicked often flourish, that the ground of their argument has been shifted. It is often now admitted that the only retributive punishment of unrepented sin to be

descried in this life is the personal moral deterioration of the sinner. This, which is certainly the worst of all consequences, is still declared to be clear proof of the punitive wrath of God. But, apart from the fact that it is odd to make the sinner's increase in sinfulness a particular act of Divine goodness, closer observation shows that moral degeneracy is not painful to its subject. If the scourge of righteous wrath is felt here, it is, as we have seen, the innocent involved in the consequences who are the whipping-boys. If a religious significance must be found for the particular pain and anguish caused by the particular acts called 'sin,' it must be rather the ethical persuasiveness of vicarious suffering than retributive pain. But again, moral degeneracy is a disease that attacks the innocent as well as the guilty. To argue that it proves Divine justice shows slight observation. How many children are born degenerate because of the sins of their parents! How many women, starting fairly as loyal wives, are gradually brutalised by ill-treatment, ceaseless work and privation! Have not whole populations, time and again, been rendered degenerate by war or famine or pestilence or slavery, which no act of theirs has provoked? The community is roused to find a remedy, but nature suggests that vengeance is no remedy.

Is it not nonsense to talk of any working of consequence that we can see as an evidence of God's punitive wrath? We may, if we choose, assume it in the far vistas of a future world: we do not see it here. Do heroes, who rush into flood and fire to save their neighbours come out unscathed? Here, in one town, is an aged fireman, twenty years an agonised invalid because of injuries contracted in saving a child. There, in another town, is a mother melancholy mad, a nuisance to herself and the world, her state brought

on by the long strain of devoted work and self-privation in the effort to rear her children in virtuous poverty. Here, again, in the shadow of a cathedral, is a reformer who gave his all for public morality, dying derelict and alone. So we could count the miserable consequences of high virtue and never come to the end of our count. Our scoffer is entitled to say that we have not faced the facts of life. If there is a God His will must be manifest in all the vast complex of the causal system. We may not abstract some isolated facts and theorise from them. The scoffer, though he maintain that nature is moral, insists that there is no evidence that the purpose of nature is within the range of ideas that circle round our punitive morality. So many causes produce evil, so much evil enters into causes that produce good, that punishment is evidently the wrong word to use when we refer to the natural consequences of what we call 'sin.'

Again, perhaps the scoffer is justified when he declares that our Christian psychology involves a belief in 'the policy of frightfulness.'

The students of modern psychology and pedagogy and penal codes have pointed out that what real goodness men have, they learn by the attraction of good, and that what morality is whipped into them is as easily whipped out of them whenever circumstances may chance to raise a heavier whip on the other side. A man who is righteous from motives of fear will be wicked when virtue involves alarming consequences. Many voices of these good folk at work upon social science have been raised in expostulation with the orthodox. Some have pointed out that the real saviours of the hardened and the vicious have had power to overcome evil in exact proportion to their lack of punitive wrath and

their power of forgiveness and fellowship. Others are telling us that the subconscious fear of punishment contracted in childhood is the cause of half our nervous diseases, ill-humours, and habitual deceits. Others, again, are showing us that when attention is fixed upon fear of punishment, it is never concerned with the fear of evil desires. The murderer restrained by fear of hanging still desires to kill; the thief afraid of prison still desires to rob; and the desire, if choked off in one direction, fructifies in many other forms of social ill. These reformers ask if the fear of sin would not be a nobler emotion for the Church to inculcate than fear of punishment. Once again, our statesmen admit that fear of punishment does not extort from men or tribes or nations the maximum of compliance. Threats and penalties, they say, are only to be resorted to after diplomatic methods have failed, and are admittedly less effective to compass the desired end.

The scoffer is very bold when he laughs at our orthodox psychology. He says that, in spite of the fact that the history of our penal law has proved that the popular passion for hurting criminals has only and always resulted in the increase of crime, our Christian spokesmen still declare that if the desire to hurt the sinner be eliminated from our abhorrence of sin, sin will increase. He asks if this popular passion for hurting offenders has not always distracted attention from any real loathing of the offence. Do men who would lynch murderers hate murder? Do those who would have men flogged for cruelty hate cruelty? Do priests who would cut off schismatics hate schism? Does France, in seeking to punish Germany for trying to domineer, hate domineering? The scoffer ends where he began: The way of France with Germany is unkind, but it is still more

unwise. He shrugs his shoulders and asks, What else can we expect in Christendom? Are not multitudes of white-robed choir-boys still soaking just such morality into their subconscious minds by constant mechanical repetition of psalms that associate it with the highest good?

The scoffer at Christianity has a vision of creative evolution inspired by infinite Mind—Mind whose Wisdom and Beauty is faintly suggested alike by the splendid majesty of the stars and by the colour and symmetry of the microscopic flower. He sees, in the midst of the vast, certain weak creatures emerging with the awful power of freedom. Before them lies the opportunity of raising themselves from the companionship of brutes to that of creative spirits. Frail and of uncertain purpose, these specks of undeveloped mental initiative attempt the new experiment of self-directed life. Many are the doors by which they may toilsomely ascend from the life centred in sensuous impressions to friendship with eternal Mind. Or they may yield to the impulses inherited from their unfree ancestors, and, using their higher wit amiss, sink lower than they. No tragedy this drama of the free-born; for in true tragedy eternal good is hidden in temporal anguish; but what high value is hidden in the failure of the free to grasp an opportunity of boundless good? Can any who have within them the living spring of compassion fail to pity sentient things who, having the power to pass successive doors, all open to an eternal joy, are still by inclination crawling on into slime and darkness? What, asks the scoffer, is the Christian doctrine concerning the Infinite Wisdom who inspires the creative process and has given to half-developed life the terrific gift of freedom? Our doctrine is that the Eternal Wisdom may be called by the name of Love, and yet that Love turns in wrath

unspeakable against those who, having received this most dangerous gift, have used it to their own loss. They are down, and yet they are to be kicked by Eternal Love. The scoffer recites the high poetry we Christians use to symbolise this attitude of Eternal Love.—"I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury." [1] "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." [2] "Then shall appear the wrath of God in the day of vengeance, which obstinate sinners, through the stubbornness of their hearts, have heaped upon themselves. . . . Then shall they call upon me (saith the Lord) but I will not hear; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. . . . O terrible voice of most just judgment, which shall be pronounced upon them, when it shall be said unto them, Go ye cursed, into the fire everlasting." [3]

The scoffer also quotes snatches of modern hymns which attempt to harness the apocalyptic imagery of punitive religion to the car of Divine progress:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible, swift sword." [4]

The scoffer who is moral but profane tells us that if God exists, and is just, it is true that the whole universe must be moving to some just end, and our high values must be divinely inspired; but that our best current values are already transcending Christian values, and the universe is attuned to a different ideal of justice. He assures us that,

[1] Isa. lxiii, Epistle for Easter Monday.
[2] Ps. ii, Psalm for Easter Sunday.
[3] Commination Service, read on Ash Wednesday.
[4] American Battle Hymn.

although he does not anticipate Divine wrath, he would personally prefer to be bound to a millstone and sunk in the sea rather than, in the present world crisis, write apologies for a faith that exalts ill-will to heaven and imagines the passion for hurting to exist in the bosom of God.

ESSAY V

Beyond Justice

Since the rise of modern science traditional conceptions of our universe have been corrected in almost all departments of knowledge. There is one notable exception: the notion of ideal morality still thrust upon us, not only by civil and international law, but also by Religion, is pre-Baconian. It is time to raise the question whether Nature may not be trying to teach us something about a higher morality than any man has yet developed. A great deal of nonsense is talked about morality and Nature. Conventional religious thinkers, on the one side, are for ever arguing that reward of merit and punishment of evil can always be discovered, if we look below the surface, in the scheme of nature. On the other side, the exponents of the ethics of Naturalism assert that Nature is palpably non-moral, since no such correspondence between happenings and desert can be detected in the system of causation. In particular, the religious apologist has been wont to insist that Nature displays *justice,* because justice is his test of good purpose in the universe; while the sceptic asserts that Nature is unjust, and therefore denounces the universe as an evil and godless thing. The contention of this essay is that both parties in this dispute are wrong. Both are assuming an *a priori* conception of what is ideally good, and by the light of that conception are pronouncing on the facts to be explained.

The first thing that confronts the man of to-day who is willing to look facts in the face and think, is the striking difference between the principles implied in Nature's method of training and disciplining her children, as revealed by scientific research and the methods of government, and the concomitant conceptions of legal justice which man—social and free-choosing animal as he is—has developed. This distinction can be blurred only at the cost either of ignoring scientific fact or of confusing moral issues.

It is, however, only the scientific mind that is, as yet, fully aware of this opposition. Popular ethical conceptions are largely conditioned by social law; and minds steeped in legal morality have always imposed a subjective interpretation, borrowed from legal theory, upon the facts of man's origin, nature and destiny. There is a passage in the drama of Job in which God says, in effect: "Did I produce all this wonderful creation which you see by Myself—I, of My own original genius? or did I ask help of you?" In the great drama, the question is one of majestic sarcasm; it caused Job to realise how small was his own intelligence; and the reader is made to feel how infinitely less grand the Work had been had man's help been sought. But do all those who explain, or who arraign, the Universe pause to ask how far the moral standard by which they judge it has been created by themselves?

As we review the high road of evolution from, let us say, the first amœba to the writers of *The Daily Mirror* or *The Hibbert Journal,* we see a process very unlike any of man's devising; but our moralists are slow to assume that it is superior. The way that man would have accomplished the business is well seen in all the Creation legends, and especially in those which have been adopted in the annals of our

Western civilisation flowing, as it does, from the wells of Hebrew and Roman law and Greek speculations on justice. We, in the persons of our theologians, would certainly have advised that humanity should come upon the scene of its earthly pilgrimage suddenly, intelligent and perfectly capable of choosing between good and evil; that God should at once reveal Himself to them as Lawgiver and Judge, and also, indeed, as Policeman and Executioner. Science, the great revealer, has taught us that man did not come upon the scene thus fully equipped. All undeveloped as were his powers of reason and self-control, he first only derived from his ancestors in herd and pack a strong sense of obligation, a sense of 'ought' and 'needs must,' an instinctive fear of the consequences of disobedience, necessary for the survival of the species. If we go to those who teach us about the habits of herd and pack and flock and swarm, we discover what summary execution is visited upon the individual who in any way violates the habit formed with a view to the common interest, and animistic man, with his rudimentary habits of reflection, able only to think and reason and imagine as our children do, imagined many a fantastic, unseen power to explain the sense of 'ought' and the inherited instinctive fear. His laws were not handed down to him from heaven, for him to preserve or defile. All unfit as he was to reason clearly, to understand his surroundings and, above all, himself, to control himself, even in such matters as he could understand—all unfit as he was, he had to make his own laws (weird things they were at first); and he had to learn to replace the blind motions of instinct by such government as would ensure the safety and continuance of the tribe or colony.

When written history takes up the tale, we see the same

method of creation going on. Man, who slowly came into existence through countless millenniums of unreasoning ancestors, is, by effort and exercise, developing his own powers, and by trial and experiment building up a changing civilisation.

What ideal of goodness or righteousness can we derive from Nature's methods and results? We need to bring out all the candour we possess, and polish it as we would a neglected mirror, before we can face this question fairly; because our very language is deceptive and all words have been fashioned by the very tradition we must challenge.

In the first place, let us notice that the natural consequences of human action may be divided into those that come upon the doer as a result of external conditions, and those psychological effects which obtain in the character of the doer. In the external sphere of things nature takes no account of motive or intention; action that traverses her habits produces dire results. A man may brave the danger of fire in order to save life or in order to steal property, but in either case, if fire touch him, he is burned. If we define moral wrong as any desire or action which violates the sense of duty in the soul of the man who desires or acts, it becomes obvious, not only that wrong action may be in complete harmony with natural law, but also that it may be in harmony with any code of human morality other than that which the culprit happens to recognise. A man, then, may do something which violates his conscience—as, for example, refusing to keep an appointed fast—which may, as it were, rejoice the heart of nature and cause her to give him a reward. He may also sear his own conscience by performing an action which good men in another land or in a later age would consider meritorious, as, for example, abetting the

escape of a slave or a hunted heretic. While, therefore, it is true that when the human soul violates its own sense of duty a certain moral deterioration results as a natural consequence, it is not at all true that even in this inevitable result of wrongdoing we can claim that nature's moral code is in harmony with any accepted ethical system.

Bad consequences follow when any living creature violates what we call the laws of nature, but not with any proportionate relation to guilt: if a child play with fire a whole town may be burned down; if a reformer be led away by righteous indignation he may become unreasonable and lead thousands astray; if monastic celibacy be preached as the highest ideal for generations, the lay population, deprived of its more serious members, deteriorates in moral character; if an Oriental population, faced by an epidemic, insists, in obedience to its religious instincts and its moral laws, upon sacrificing to its gods instead of obeying medical regulations, the epidemic, once started, will slay its thousands. When such cases are seen around us to-day, they may be called—with the facility of the moral apologist—the results of sinning against light: we say the culprits ought to have attended to the teachings of science. But if we look back to the beginning of things, we see that when there was no light, no science, for more generations than we can count, for ages and millenniums, the human race suffered from greater or less devastation produced by mere mistake, even though the mistake consisted in moral and religious practices performed with heroic self-devotion. That such consequences appeared to child races to be the punishments of some capricious deity is easily explicable. Before the idea of justice was developed there was no standard by which to rectify the mistake; but the tradition consequent on this

mistake is now no excuse for the fact that punishment and consequences are words still too often used as synonymous in slippery modern theological apologetic. The same action may be both a punishment and a consequence, as what follows when a schoolboy awakes his master's ire; but punishment is a term which belongs only to a system of legal morality: it means something visited upon a sinner by a conscious agent on account of the sinner's culpability.

Thus Nature has neither rewards nor punishments: she has consequences, but she consults neither Moses nor Westermarck in their distribution. Her sun shines alike on evil and on good; her gentle rain gives life to the thirsty lands of oppressor and oppressed. When rot and moss undermine the ruined tower, it falls, crushing whoever is beneath: when the little nation bursts with most righteous indignation in noble rebellion against a too powerful oppressor it is crushed, and the members of its peaceful proletariat, with their children that 'know not the right hand from the left,' and their 'much cattle,' endure the greater bulk of the consequent suffering. We know well that earthquake and fire and flood destroy with indiscriminate fury, arousing in men that sympathy and compassion which only the sight of suffering obviously undeserved can elicit.

Are we, then, to assume that Nature is non-moral? Or is it possible that Nature manifests purpose but our moralists have failed to interpret that purpose? For those who believe in God with a belief founded upon an inference from human values and tested by religious experience must affirm that Nature, even external and physical nature, and still more nature as seen in human psychology, is a manifestation of His character, and must therefore be moving under some

Divine purpose and working to some good end. We have ceased to be polytheistic: we do not believe in a conflict of deities. *Two* are too many for our understanding: even the dual power, Satan, has fallen from heaven. If God exists, all things must be working together for good. It does not follow that all things are now good, that there is in the nature of things no right or wrong.

Let us first ask what sort of good Nature appears to aim at. We may then discover what Nature would eradicate as wrong. If within Nature there is purpose, one part of that purpose has evidently been to teach man to cultivate his powers of observation, of analysis and comparison and of inference. Without these he was the sport of natural forces: by cultivating these he is slowly becoming the master of those forces. Physical nature puts a premium on intellectual industry and genius, above all on genius which gathers the fruits of industry and makes a new leap therefrom, commanding in mankind a new venture of scientific faith. The other part of Nature's purpose would appear to be to bring men to brotherly co-operation. The individual is powerless against physical dangers, and continued co-operation is impossible without the sentiments of brotherhood. If within our psychological nature there is purpose, beginning far back in the time when the instincts and emotions of the higher animals were the crown of the biological system, as man's rational nature now is, the purpose has evidently been to develop social character, not only by the development of the natural power of understanding (as we have just seen), but by training the conative and emotional natures so to work that the man may more fully adapt himself to his environment and adapt the environment to himself. And since the most important part of man's natural environment is his

fellow-man, Nature puts a premium upon the understanding of social environment and upon social virtue.

We may test this conclusion by observing that the line of human advance has been toward intellectual life and brotherhood. If we examine Prof. MacDougall's classification of the primitive instincts—and that classification will serve us as well as any other—we see in primitive man the instincts of parental protection and curiosity, with the other strong primary instincts of pugnacity, of sex, of flight from an object of fear and repulsion from an object of disgust, the gregarious instinct, the instincts of self-display and of self-abasement: but let us here note that in the higher animals we find all these instincts already strongly developed; those of curiosity and mutual protection are still rudimentary. Curiosity is there, among the animals, but not obviously, and it does not appear to be of great utility; the instinct of parental protection is markedly there, but is exercised in a very partial and temporary way, belonging almost exclusively to the female, and to her only for a few weeks after the birth of offspring. Yet in the panorama of human history, along what line has man's greatest development come? We find him, in early stages, full-grown and full-blown in his instincts of belligerence and flight and repulsion and self-assertion, in the instinct to cringe before a greater power, the gregarious instinct and the instinct of sex. The instinct of parental protection has developed, but not far; for except in such tribal life as made numerous children an advantage, we find the destruction of superfluous offspring common. And curiosity—the question of 'why?' and 'what?'—that also is stronger in primitive man than among the animals, but still rudimentary. But progress in human welfare has depended only upon the development of these two

instincts of curiosity and of protection: the one has caused the whole development of man's rational life, has created science and, by developing his power of criticism, has refined his æsthetic and moral perceptions and enabled him to choose at times between his instinctive impulses: the other —the instinct of protection—has been the cause of all human progress in both justice and mercy. Man is no better fighter now than he was before history began; perhaps he is even less violent and less courageous; his sexual passion; his desire to live in communities; his desire to shun what is fearful or disagreeable; his desire to vaunt himself, or to cringe before a tyrant, are not more strong in him to-day than they were—to use an old theological phrase—before the Flood. But the advance in the development of his natural desire for knowledge and his natural desire to protect the weak and unfortunate is stupendous. Creative evolution is making him make himself. He can only persist by becoming more intellectual and more brotherly.

If we doubt this we may examine human advance in more detail. Let us consider, for example, the difference between the tigress nursing her cubs and—say—any statesman of to-day of average good feeling and virtue in any Christian or non-Christian country, say Japan. We may take two of whom we know something. M. Poincaré and Mr Baldwin. There is nothing wanting in the mercy and kindness of the tigress toward her own cubs for the few weeks that they are dependent upon her. It is the limitation of her protective self-devotion that makes her the symbol of unreasoning ferocity. She has no kindly feeling toward the cubs of any other tigress, and none for her own when they are grown. She would tear her own mother if she disputed the prey with her, and she recognises no other family relation. Her

feeling for her mate appears to be transient and utilitarian. M. Poincaré, on the other hand, would devote himself to the protection, not only of every baby belonging to the French nation, but of every adult also. His instinct of protection, again, is very limited, but consider the enormous advance! And no doubt every normal man in France would exhibit as wide a protective instinct, and many would show a wider. If we turn to Mr Baldwin and the better sort of Britons, we seem to see an even greater development of protective kindliness, although it may, of course, be mere national conceit to say so, for in time past we have claimed, with perhaps only moderate justification, that England was the protector of weaker nations. Such claim was, in the intention of many, not all cant and hypocrisy. The majority of both British and Americans are perhaps still hampered by much of the tiger's limitation of understanding and emotion, but there are also very many, in both English-speaking nations, as in the Scandinavian nations, whose protective instinct is no longer national but humanitarian. The Quaker relief organisations, supplying, as they have done, workers for all other international relief undertakings, are a striking example, because quiet, effective and persistent industry is always a truer index to character than such transient and emotional benevolence as produces funds in all civilised centres for the victims of any dramatic disaster.

Is it not evident that it is the growth of this protective instinct, extending from the little child to the grown child, thrown over the mate when he or she needs protection, elevated until the parent as much as the babe becomes a charge upon the family; widening out from the family to the children, the aged and the necessitous of the tribe, and finally

to the modern nation, that has produced whatever degree of mutual welfare humanity may now enjoy?

Let us, again, consider the difference between the savage, investigating with childlike or animal curiosity some new object of interest, and M. Pasteur in his bacteriological laboratory, or Dr Frazer investigating the folk-lore of the Old Testament. Cows will walk round and round and stare at a traveller's cloak left in their pasture. The savage, perceiving a new star in the heavens, will invent a fantastic myth to account for it. The modern scientist, rising above aimless wonder and speculative imagination, seeks for fact and develops that unquenchable thirst for truth and reality which has curbed and trained and strengthened human imagination, has harnessed natural forces, setting them to work on all the areas of land and sea for man's benefit, and is teaching him how to discipline and use to the best advantage his natural powers.

Is it not clear that if what we call nature in our biological development has psychological purpose, it is to train man's character, especially by the increase of his intellectual powers and his protective activities?

Let us now turn, by contrast, to those imaginings of the universe which were evidently convenient, if not necessary, to all the early stages of human civilisation.

In human communities, from the first, what necessity knew was law. Forced by natural danger into societies, the art of controlling anti-social impulses became the art of life. Understanding his natural human environment imperfectly, man could not fashion a government in harmony with nature. The methods of nature and of human government early began to diverge, and have diverged more and more; but they are in history inextricably mixed together

because nature provided material and worked its own way in the midst of artificial taboos and codes of law. Able to draw inferences, not only from what he saw but from what he imagined; with his ability to choose between his impulses —directing interest to one or the other; man could not flourish without producing such picturesque conceptions of law and law-giver, official punisher and judge, as would rule the imagination. These were necessary to life, because public opinion educated by these and supported by these (the sanction of all government) was necessary. Public opinion, which is our name for current moral sentiment, reminds us of the child's puzzle—Which was created first, the hen or the egg? Man, still in the process of creation, the instrument and subject of his own self-creation as a social being, is always consciously forming and unconsciously formed by, the public moral sentiment, which the race secretes and lives by as bees secrete and live on honey. To fashion the opinion or sentiment required for the moulding of the instincts of belligerence with its sentiment of resentment, and the instinct of protection with its compassionate emotion, the racial mind unconsciously used also the instincts of awe and self-abasement, and fashioned a legal mythology and a legal religion.

From the very beginning man has always sought to build himself a Holy City. The formation of every absurd taboo, the attribution of powers to the living totem, the carving of every grotesque fetish, were all efforts towards the production of an ideal human society. The laws formed to preserve the achievement—whatever achievement it was—in this direction, the punishments meted out to those who would violate such laws, all belonged to the same effort—the search for the ideal state; and the strangest part of our human

history is that the Holy City in all its stages—even in its earliest, absurd, nasty and worse than beastly, stages—was always seen as let down from heaven. The laws were always the laws of God, however the Divinity might be conceived. The punishments meted out were the punishments of God, and were given to avert the much worse punishments which the God meted out on his own initiative—the storm, the flood, the drought, the pestilence. As the use of the frontal brain, and with its use the refining of æsthetic and moral perceptions, develops, we see in human history the effort to construct the ideal state producing results very diverse, sometimes better and sometimes worse, but on the whole tending to produce the greater welfare of the greater number as the ages have moved on. Humanity is still quite young: on any scientific computation of the duration of the earth's heat, humanity has still some millions of years in which to develop the ideal state. But looking back we can see that what advance has been made in the art of social construction has been achieved by the tempering of what man called justice by the developing protective instinct. Government by force has always existed, might resting upon the acquiescence or approval of public opinion. But governments have only promoted conditions making for the welfare of the majority in proportion as the ideal of justice has been developed, both by rulers and by ruled, in harmony with the growth of the protective instinct. Very noble has been the ever intenser pursuit of an ideal justice. Noblest of all the world's martyrs are those who have died to uphold what they believed to be the ideal justice—for the art of social living, which is the well-being of the race, has so far depended upon the knowledge and practice of justice. Yet let us notice that this noble conception which man calls justice is

essentially a legal conception. It is built up from notions of legal procedure. But law has nothing to do with goodness, only with behaviour. Every community has a right to require certain behaviour from its members. It is necessary, *e.g.*, that men should not steal. Justice requires whatever the community thinks necessary to prevent the act of theft. Such justice has nothing to do with the desire to steal. Human law does not concern itself at all with whether men are good or bad at heart. As long as the revisers of human law are seeking to prevent, or put an end to, bad behaviour, no fault can be found with a justice which is as much tempered with mercy as the development of the community will permit. But what we need to realise is that law, except in its function of public educator, does not touch the issue of true goodness or real wickedness. A man may hunger and thirst to do right or to do wrong: the law has nothing to say concerning the springs of conduct.

But human governments have not so far been able to stand without projecting themselves, like the Brocken spectre, upon the heavens. The public opinion needed for their support was formed by attributing legal morality and legal justice to God. This was done simply and honestly in the centuries when behaviour was the whole of virtue. It was done traditionally, and gradually with less and less honesty of moral apologetic when man began to perceive that true virtue consisted in the love of virtue, which could only come into existence by the attraction of beauty and truth. In the Book of Jeremiah we are told, "I the Lord search the heart," in the Epistles of James that no fountain can yield both salt water and fresh, and in the Gospel of Matthew that only a good tree brings forth good fruit. In history we can see

plainly that, so long as human ideals of government were almost exclusively military, God—whether Jehovah or Jove —was a God of hosts, of battles, of tyrannical caprice. When, by the just resentment of the oppressed and a further development of the protective impulse, a better justice was developed, God became more and more judicial, the Giver of amended codes, the Judge before whose bar king and slave alike were arraigned.

Our question to-day is whether the mythology of legal justice is not obsolescent and as hampering to our civilisation to-day as was the God whose only right was might in the days when Hebrew and Roman laws were taking on the colour of reflective justice. In Western civilisation the capricious Zeus or Jove did not go down before the God of early Hebrew mythology revealed in the Books of Judges and Joshua, but before a Jehovah who was the embodiment of the best in late Hebrew and Roman law, a law influenced by the highest Greek speculation on the nature of justice. The character and message of Jesus Christ could not be made catholic in the Empire until identified with the legal Jehovah. It is a serious question to-day whether what we have called Christian civilisation does not need to slough off its legal mythology if it is not to fail. The law and justice necessary to human life must, if they are to continue adequate, be progressively modified by growing knowledge and developing compassion. To this end it is now necessary that they should be seen as human and temporal, not as divine and eternal.

If we examine the annuals of our own religion and our own law, from their earliest beginnings until now, we shall find two strains of effort toward, and achievement of, the Good, two groups of notions concerning it. We shall find

these from the very first in conflict, and the busy brains of all who uphold official religion always at work to argue an inner unison between them. Retributive justice, which is invented to curb and control the full-grown instinct of resentful combat, and mercy, which wells up from the natural heart of parental protection—these two have in all ages appeared to the plain man and to the prophet to differ. Mercy, mere mercy, like Nature, knows nothing of moral desert. If you could prove to a tigress that one of her cubs had infringed the rights of an alien, would it make any difference in her determination to protect her cub? No normal, unsophisticated mother is willing to see her helpless child in the clutches of punitive justice. Wherever the passion of mercy has sway, the escaped convict is hidden and nourished, the runaway slave is helped to freedom.

All moral action has a basis in instinct; instinct when by reflection it is sublimated into principle, becomes moral. When the instinct of mercy is thus developed by reflection it is found that the merciful have a far more intense antipathy than have the just to all sins that bring evil consequences upon the community; for the merciful seek always and at great self-sacrifice to get rid of the cause of sin. Mercy, like Nature, offers to combat sinfulness by the persuasive power of innocent suffering. The merciful, with piercing insight, have always perceived, not only that most sinners are more sinned against by the world than sinning, but also that the term 'sinner' denotes, not a human being but an abstraction; for all concrete sinners are in some points, and often in most points, virtuous persons. And furthermore, the merciful, with a wisdom never granted to the just, have always perceived that no conduct is truly

good unless its motive is the love of goodness, and to the development of the love of goodness all penal regulations are irrelevant.

Retributive justice, on the other hand, counts forgiveness a sin until the demands of justice are satisfied. The opposition between justice and mercy is revealed most finely and clearly, not in lower forms, but in the highest ideals of justice the world has produced and religion has attributed to God. Retributive justice demands that the criminal or sinner suffer even when suffering is futile to reform or deter. Prof. Westermarck says:[1]

"Resentment gives way to forgiveness only in the case of repentance, not in the case of incorrigibility. Hence, not even the reformationist regards incorrigibility as a legitimate ground for exempting a person from punishment, although this flatly contradicts his theory about the true aim of all punishment (*i.e.*, reformation). . . . Now it may be thought that men have no right to give vent to their moral resentment in a way which hurts their neighbours unless some benefit may be expected from it. . . . It is a notion of this kind that lies at the bottom of the utilitarian theories of punishment. They are protests against purposeless infliction of pain, against crude ideas of retributive justice, against theories hardly in advance of the low feelings of the popular mind. . . . As we have seen they ignore the fact that a punishment, in order to be recognized as just, must not transgress the limits set down by moral disapproval, that it must not be inflicted on innocent persons, that it must be proportioned to the guilt, that offenders who are amenable to discipline must not be treated more severely than incorrigible criminals. These theories also seem to exaggerate the deterring or reforming influence which punishments exercise upon criminals, whilst, in another respect, they take too narrow a view of its social usefulness. Whether its voice inspire fear or not, whether it wake up a sleeping conscience or not,

[1] *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas,* Vol. I, pp. 88-90, 92.

punishment, at all events, tells people in plain terms what, in the opinion of the society, they ought not to do. . . . It is the instinctive desire to inflict counter-pain that gives to moral indignation its most important characteristic. Without it, moral condemnation and the ideas of right and wrong would never have come into existence. Without it, we should no more condemn a bad man than a poisonous plant. The reason why moral judgments are passed on volitional beings, or their acts, is not merely that they are volitional, but that they are sensitive as well; and however much we try to concentrate our indignation on the act, it derives its peculiar flavour from being directed against a sensitive agent. I have heard persons of a highly sympathetic cast of mind assert that a wrong act awakens in them only sorrow, not indignation; but though sorrow be the predominant element in their state of mind, I believe that, on a closer inspection, they would find there another emotion as well, one in which there is immanent an element of hostility, however slight. It is true that the intensity of moral indignation cannot always be measured by the actual desire to cause pain to the offender; but its intensity seems nevertheless to be connected with the amount of suffering which the indignant man is willing to let the offender undergo in consequence of the offence."

Dr James Moffatt, the present editor of *The Expositor,* in an article in *The British Weekly* (Oct. 26, 1922) entitled "The New Jesus," maintains that the teaching of Jesus Christ, made forgiveness between man and man wait always upon the repentance of the evil-doer. He calls this teaching "the element of justice in God." Dr Goudge, Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, tells us in *The Church Quarterly* (April 1923) "God no more wills punishment than He wills sin. But given the sin, He wills the punishment. . . . It is quite true that we do not at present see the system exactly adapted in detail to the desert of each individual or group; but that does not affect the fact that to a large extent we do see it so

adapted. If we did not, Faith could descry no moral universe."

It will be seen from these extracts that Prof. Westermarck's explanation of human justice is valid—but he is merely explaining the present stage of the development of civilisation. His book is filled with the history of many past stages of civil progress; he does not treat of future stages, still less of eternal truth. The religious writers quoted, on the other hand, are representing God as having no better way of dealing with wrongdoers than man has; as having no more mercy for the unrepentant than man has, and they seek to identify eternal good with the legal morality which has so far been convenient to man. To those of us who believe that God is the sustaining and guiding power of creative evolution, it is evident that we must look for God's self-revelation to man either in the immanent force which has caused man's development to depend on the expansion of his understanding and his protective emotion or in the legal myth of official religion. The time has come when we must ask if we can serve the two masters—deified law and deified grace, supreme justice and supreme mercy.

Look, for example, at two nations, both suffering terrible disaster. Nature by overwhelming Japan with unmerited calamity, has made the whole world akin for the time. International law, by seeking to overwhelm certain populations by retributive penalties, has plunged Europe into greater and more deep-seated animosities. We do well to reflect on these things. If we look upon the panorama of our development, we see that men, developing wider and deeper sympathies, have always had their compassion inhibited, not only by natural selfishness, but by legal notions of desert. Just in so far as an individual or nation has

been regarded as criminal, compassion has been checked as a vice. This checking of compassion, this sanctification of resentment by a legal morality, now that the world has become one huge neighborhood, will surely entail intolerable evils if it be not stopped by the formation in our great society of a higher idea of good and of God.

Nature, by creating danger, pushes men to co-operation and brotherhood. Legal religion has taught separation by the demarcation of rights and privileges. Nature pushes men to intellectual progress and enterprise. Legal religion demands unreasoning belief and obedience. Nature pushes to wider and ever wider protective activities. Legal religion would urge the condemnation of half mankind on the ground of desert. Nature persuades the sinner by inflicting innocent suffering. Legal religion insists that he can be spurred to virtue by threats and penalties. Nature suggests that retributive justice has a subordinate place as a human convenience, a threshold to the good life. Legal religion has exalted retributive justice to the supreme place, the throne of God.

It is for those who 'profess and call themselves Christian' to ask themselves very seriously whether a study of nature does not make retributive justice appear paltry and whether the protective and tender emotions, which Jesus Christ attributed in their supreme degree to God, can be identified with the retributive justice commonly assumed to belong to God.

What is the alternative to legal religion? Is it not just the best elements in that very religion breaking through the hard chrysalis and leaving it behind? In a spiritual universe the souls that love the good will find unending satisfaction in endless enterprise of creative power and heroic

adventure, while those who love evil can experience only transient pleasures and disappointments that can only end with the turning of desire to true delight. Is it therefore immoral to conceive of God as an eternal Friend to all sentient things, inspiring in all, as they will receive it, power to be wise, to be brotherly, to enter daily and hourly more deeply into sympathy with nature and with Himself.

It is even possible that when the life of the Divine Founder of Christianity is interpreted by the insight of true loyalty, it may be seen that His essential message was to enthrone in Heaven only the protective activity and tender emotions of the paternal instincts, and to give to man such confidence in the creative wisdom of this All-Father that he will not fear to discard any doctrine 'said by them of old time' if found irrelevant to the only true morality, that of genuine inward aspiration.

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